William Davison.

TWELVE SERMONS

Preach'd upon

Several Occasions.

By the Right Reverend Father in God,

Richard L^d. Bishop of *Bath* and *Wells*.

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SER-

SERMON I.

Preached before the

QUEEN

AT

WHITE-HALL,

March the 1ſt. 1690.

MATTH. V. 20.

For I ſay unto you, That except your Righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

OUR Bleſſed *Saviour* doth, in this Chapter, begin his excellent Sermon upon the Mount. So far he complies with *Moſes*, who delivered his Law from a Mountain alſo. But the

Law which came by *Moſes* came from a Mount *Ebal*, or Mount of *Curſes*, but
Joh n 1. 17. the words of *Grace and Truth* which *Jeſus* ſpake, came from a Mount of *Bleſ-*
Exod. 19. 18, 19. *ſings*. The Law came from a Mountain
Deut 32. 2. of *Smoak*, and *Fire*, and *Thunder*; The Doctrine of Chriſt *drops as the Rain, diſtills as the Dew; as the ſmall Rain upon the tender Herb, and ſhowers upon the Graſs*. Now leſt his Hearers ſhould ſurmiſe, that he intended to make void the Law and the Prophets, he lets them
v. 17. know, that he did *not come to deſtroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil*, i. e. To advance them rather to an higher pitch, a more ſpiritual and ſevere ſenſe, than the bare Letter, and Gloſſes of their Doctors amounted to. He moreover tells them, That for the Law (the Moral Law which *Moſes* delivered from a
v. 18. Mountain) its Obligation ſhould never be extinguiſh'd as long as the World en-
v. 19. dured; and that he that ſhould *break this Law*, or *teach men to do ſo*, ſhou'd be rejected of God; and he that ſhould *do and teach it*, ſhould be accepted of him, and rewarded by him. He adds, That he is ſo far from diſcharging men from their Obedience to this Law, that he indiſpenſibly requires of all his Followers,

lowers, a greater degree of Sanctity and Holineſs, than the greateſt contenders for the Law of *Moſes*, the moſt learned and ſtrict men among them (*i.e.* the Scribes and Phariſees) had arrived unto. *For I ſay unto you, Except the Righteouſneſs of a Chriſtian ſhall exceed that of the Scribes and Phariſees, he ſhall in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

For my better ſpeaking to this Propoſition I ſhall uſe the following method:

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew what is meant by Righteouſneſs.

Secondly, Who are theſe Scribes and Phariſees, and how far their Righteouſneſs extended.

Thirdly, Wherein their Righteouſneſs was defective, and fell ſhort of that Evangelical Righteouſneſs which is neceſſary to the Salvation of a Chriſtian.

Fourthly, I ſhall make ſome Application of the whole.

I. What is meant by Righteouſneſs in this place. This word ſignifies, ſometimes one Grace or Vertue, ſometimes another: But here the Context forbids us to limit or reſtrain it. It comprehends

all Vertue and real Goodneſs, or an intire obedience to the whole Law. And thus it frequently ſignifies in the *New Teſtament*; as where there is mention of *Serving God in Righteouſneſs, working and doing Righteouſneſs, and knowing the way of Righteouſneſs:* where it ſignifies every good thing.

Luk. 1. 75.
Act 10. 35.
2 Joh. 3. 7.
2 Pet. 2. 21.

II. Who are theſe Scribes and Phariſees; and how far their Righteouſneſs extended.

Scribe denotes an *Office*, *Phariſee* a *Sect*. The ſame man might be, and ſometimes was, both a *Scribe* and a *Phariſee*.

The *Scribe* among the *Jews* was the ſame with a Learned Man, or Man of *Letters*: He was oppoſed to a rude or illiterate Man. The word (whence the Scribe hath his name in Greek) in the *New Teſtament* ſignifies Learning: but this Learning referred to the Law of God, and Offices of the Synagogue; as the *Jewiſh* Learning did. The *Scribes* are the ſame with the *Lawyers*: The ſame man is by one Evangeliſt called a *Lawyer*, by another a *Scribe*; and where 'tis *Lawyer* in the *Greek*, 'tis *Scribe* in the *Syriack Verſion*. The *Scribes* were verſed

Iſai. 33. 18.
Scribe, *Literatus*. V. Lat.
Act. 26. 24.
Joh. 7. 15.
Act. 4 13.
Matth. 22. 35. with Mark 12. 18.
Luk 11. 45. with the *Syriack*.

verſed in the Law, Regiſters of the Synagogues, Publick Notaries, and Clerks to the *Sanhedrin*: Employed alſo in writing Bills of Divorces, and Sentences of the Law upon the Poſts, and in the Phylacteries. They were alſo the Directors of the *Jewiſh* Calendar, and ſignified the beginning of the Month and Year; Men of great fame for their Knowledge among the People; as is inſinuated by a Saying among the *Jews*, *That after the Age of the Prophets ſucceeded the Age of the Scribes.* Prophets had now ceaſed of a long time in *Iſrael*; the *Jews* took the Scribes as their Subſtitutes, that ſupply'd, in great meaſure, that defect; and to this purpoſe we may obſerve, that the *Chaldee Paraphraſt*, where the word *Prophet* is in the Hebrew Text, turns it by *Scribe*, as that which comes next unto it.

Sanhedrin c. 4. S. 3. L'Empereur Annot. in Bertram R. H. c. 18. V. Targum on Cant. 7. 4.

V. Targ. upon Iſa. 28. 7. 1 Sam. 10. 5, 10, 11, 12. & ch. 19. 24, 28. Jer. 6. 6, 13. Ezek. 7. 26.

The *Scribes* were not only *Learned* in the Law, but *Teachers* of it alſo: They were *a guide to the Blind, and a light to them that ſat in Darkneſs.* They are much miſtaken that think they did only write and read; they were Doctors and Preachers of the Law. We find *Ezra* the Scribe upon a Pulpit of Wood; and the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* ſitting in

Neh. 4. 8.

Targum on Hosea 4. 4. Matt. 23. 2, 3. *the Chair of* Moses; and 'tis said, That *Jesus taught with Authority, and not as the Scribes*, Matt. 7. 29. They were the *Law-givers* mentioned by *Jacob*, Gen. 49. 10. which were to continue till *Shiloh* came. In a word, they were men of Learning; skilled in the Law, and Preachers of it also.

The *Pharisees* were a Sect among the *Jews*, who had their name from an Hebrew word which signifies to *separate* or *divide*: and the name did exactly agree to the Sect; as will further appear afterwards.

Concerning the Righteousness of these men we are now to enquire; and then we are oblig'd to consider, whether or no our Righteousness do exceed theirs.

Luk. 18. 11. Act. 26. 5. 1. They were free from Debauchery and Prophaneness, from contempt of Religion, and dis-belief of a Future State: They were not *Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers*. Nor have we the *Pharisees bare word for it*; St. *Paul* calls it Phil. 3. 5. *the most strict Sect*: Nor is that all which he says, for he placeth it at the top of his other privileges, that he *was circumcised the eighth day, of the Stock of* Israel, *and Tribe of* Benjamin, *an* Hebrew *of the* Hebrews; and to these he adds as his

his great privilege, and matter of his choice, *as touching the Law a* Phariſee. The ſame Apoſtle affirming before *Ananias*, that he *had lived in all good Conſcience before God until that day*, adds moreover, *that he was a* Phariſee, and *the Son of a* Phariſee; and conſequently, being of that moſt ſtrict Sect, not likely to be obnoxious, for any great Crime, to the ſeverity of that Council. And as the Phariſees *Lives* were not Scandalous and Prophane, ſo neither were they of thoſe depraved *Principles* which the *Sadducees* had entertained: For whereas this Sect were of a belief that there was *no Reſurrection*, *Angel*, or *Spirit* (which are Principles very deſtructive to a good Life;) the Phariſees believed all this, and conſequently, were oblig'd to a Life anſwerable to ſuch a Belief.

Act. 23. 1, 6.

Act. 23. 8. with 1 Cor. 15, 32.

2. They were men who ſet themſelves apart to the Study of the Law of God, and taught it others; and this might be one reaſon of their Name alſo. It hath been thought, that where St. *Paul* ſays, that he was *ſeparated unto the Goſpel*, he alludes to the Separation, whereby, when he was a Phariſee, he was ſet apart to the ſtudy of the Law. Theſe men did not do by the Law as we do

Rom. 1. 1.

by the H. Scriptures, look into it at ſpare Hours, but devoted themſelves to this Employment. *Solomon* ſays of him who gives himſelf up to the ſtudy of Wiſdom, *through deſire a man having ſeparated himſelf, ſeeketh and intermedleth with all Wiſdom.* Theſe men ſat in the Chair of *Moſes*, and taught the People ſuch wholſome Doctrine, that our Saviour commands his Followers to be their Hearers.

Prov. 18. 1. Mat. 7. 29. Joh. 7. 49. Matt. 23. 2, 3.

3. They withdrew from the Familiarity and Converſation of men of evil *Lives* and bad *Fame*. They were offended at our Saviour for eating with Publicans and Sinners, ſuch a Teſtimony did they bear againſt the Vices of the Age.

Matt. 9. 11. Luk. 7. 39. & c. 15. v. 2.

4. They were very juſt and righteous in their Dealings with men; they paid their Debts and Duties. *Jeſus* takes notice of one remarkable inſtance of their exact Juſtice, and that was in paying their Tithes: In this they were ſo very curious, that they paid Tythe of the ſmalleſt things they had; of *Mint* and *Dill* (we miſ-render it *Aniſe*) and *Cummin*, of the ſmalleſt Seeds and Herbs; St. *Luke* hath it, *Rue and all manner of Herbs:* So that the Phariſee might truly

Matt. 23. 23. Luk. 11. 42. & c. 18. 12.

ſay

ſay (whatever we Chriſtians can do) that he paid Tythe of all that he did poſſeſs, and ſo needed not to give his Oblation, with his Reſtitution, to the Prieſt in his life time; nor leave a Mortuary at his death, *pro decimis omiſſis*, for his Tythe unpaid. This our Saviour does *not only obſerve* in them, but *commends* it alſo. In this matter they acquitted themſelves well from the guilt of robbing God of his Tythe; and might ſay, as he under the Law of *Moſes* was to do, who had made an end of tything all the Tythes of his Increaſe, that they had brought away the hallowed things *out of their Houſes, and given them to the Levite.* This was an inſtance of very exact Righteouſneſs in paying the utmoſt due to them who miniſtred in Holy Things; eſpecially in the Scribes and Phariſees who were themſelves Teachers of the Law, and ſo far Miniſters of Holy Things, as well as the Sons of *Aaron.* And 'tis the more remarkable inſtance of their exact Juſtice ſtill, becauſe (as is well obſerved by a Learned Man of our own) *it is manifeſt by the Letter of the Law, of all fruits of the Earth, only Corn, and Wine, and Oyl are tythable.* And *Maimonides* tells us expreſsly,

Mal. 3. 8.

Deut. 26. 13.

Mr. *Thorndike's* Epilogue, p. 116. Book I.

Maimon. H. Terumoth. c. 2. expreſsly, *That for Herbs, though the food of men, they were not tythable; but only upon the conſtitution of their wiſe men.*

5. They were much given to Prayer and Faſting, and had a great regard for the Sabbath-day, to ſay nothing of their great Watching and exemplary Continence. They faſted *two days in a week*; Luk. 18. as the Phariſee in the Parable profeſſeth, and their Writers report. We read elſe- Matt. 9 14. where, that they *faſted oft*. This Abſtinence is a pitch higher than Righteous Dealing; it lays a Curb upon the Animal Life: and if it be not Piety 'tis a good Inſtrument of it, and helps to promote it very much; 'tis a Yoak that the ſenſual part does not care to bear. But their frequent Faſting being accompany'd with Prayer, and *long Prayers*, is Matt. 23. 14. ſtill the more ſpecious, and a more effectual Inſtrument of Piety, and Expreſſion of ſincere Repentance; which being nothing more than a *turning from the Creature to God*, this ſeems to be performed by *Faſting*, which is an *abſtaining from the Creature*; and by *Prayer*, which is a *turning to God*. Theſe two in conjunction are powerful Inſtruments for the diſpoſſeſſing the moſt obſtinate Devil;

Devil; our Saviour having told his Diſciples of one *certain kind, that went not out but by Prayer and Faſting*, Matt. 17. 21. Theſe two are powerful Engines againſt the Kingdom of the Devil. If we add to this, that they were for a ſtrict obſervation of the Sabbath-day, and ſharp Reprovers of the leaſt breach of it, this will be ſtill a farther inſtance of their zeal for the Law of God. Matt. 12. 2.

6. We may add to what hath been ſaid, that they were exact obſervers of the Traditions of their Elders, and the Rites and Uſages commended to them by their Conſiſtory; ſuch as the *waſhing their Hands* when they *did eat Bread*, or *came from the Market*; the *waſhing* of *Cups*, and *Pots*, and *Veſſels* of *Braſs*; the *making broad* their *Phylacteries*, and *enlarging* the *Borders* of their *Garments*: Theſe things had a ſhew of Holineſs; and the more ſpecious, becauſe practis'd under the *Jewiſh* OEconomy, where ſuch things were not only uſed but commanded alſo. Theſe things being ſymbolical, and uſed under a Diſpenſation full of Types and Symbols of Gods appointment; (the People of *Iſrael*, at that time, and their outward ſervice, being an entire Type or Sacrament of Matt. 15. 2. Mark 7. 4. Mat. 23. 5.

better

better things;) and these things being done in obedience to their Elders and Wise-men, seemed to serve the Ends, not onely of Holiness, but Peace also.

Thus have I given you a faithful account of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, of their *Faith* and *Manners*. They were neither *Prophane* nor *Sacrilegious*; they were no *Adulterers*, &c. and paid *Tythe* of all they did possess. I fear too many Christians either do not *abhor Idols*, or do *commit Sacrilege*; *worship* a *false* God, or *rob* the *True*. These men fasted oft, prayed much, studyed the Law, and taught it others. They conformed to the Constitutions of the Elders, and shunned the Conversation of prophane Men; were zealous observers of the Sabbath, and sharp reprovers of the prophaners of it; they were regular in their Manners, and Orthodox in their Faith. In a word, the *Jews*, of all People, had the greatest pledges of God's favour, and bid fairest for the Kingdom of Heaven: Among them, the learned and the strictest stood fairest, among which, none were to be compared to the Scribes and Pharisees, who were therefore of all Mankind the most likely to be Heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom; and yet our

Rom. 2. 22.

Saviour

Saviour ſays unto his Followers, *Except your Righteouſneſs*, &c.

You will be apt to ſay, This is an *hard ſaying*, and *who then can be ſaved?* They who come up to the Phariſaical Righteouſneſs are prone to ſooth themſelves, and by others will be eſteemed *Righteous overmuch*. The Phariſees had by their Righteouſneſs gained ſuch an Authority among the People, that (as *Joſephus* relates) they gave them credit when they ſpake againſt the *King and againſt the High-prieſt*: And elſewhere he tells, that they had gained ſo great a Reputation, that they were able *to make oppoſition againſt Kings*: And therefore, becauſe we ſhall every one be apt to ſay, when we are Phariſaically Righteous, as the Man in the Goſpel, *What lack I yet?* I ſhall,

Joſeph. *Antiq.* l. 13. c. 18.

l. 17. c. 3.

Matt. 19. 20.

III. Shew, what is that *ſomething more* which *Jeſus* expects from his Followers. The Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees was defective in the following Particulars, in which we muſt either exceed and go beyond them, or elſe muſt not look to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. The

1. The Scribes and Phariſees were indeed very ſcrupulous in ſmall matters, but were greatly defective in the greater things of the Law; they paid Tythe of *Mint*, *Dill* and *Cummin*; and ſo far our Saviour commends them: but then for thoſe ſmall Tythes they made great abatements in the weightier things of the Law, when they omitted *Judgment*, *Mercy*, and *Truth*; or, as St. *Luke* hath it, they *paſs'd over Judgment and the love of God:* They ſtrained at a *Gnat* and ſwallowed a *Camel*; they *conformed* indeed to the *Conſtitutions* of the *Elders*, but *diſpenſed* with the *Law of God*; they waſhed their *Hands*, but kept their *Hearts* unclean; they withdrew from *evil men*, but retained *evil thoughts*; they ſhunned a *dead Body*, but not *dead Works*; they had a great zeal for *little* things, and for the *weightier* none at all. And it is to be feared, that many Chriſtians go no farther; we are zealous about things comparatively ſmall, about the *Borders* and *Fringes* of *Religion*, and neglect the *love of God and of our Neighbour*, thoſe firſt and great Commandments; we contend about things *indifferent*, and do not aſſault the body of Sin, which clogs and keeps down the Divine

Matt. 23. 23.
Luk. 11. 42.
Matt. 15. 3.

Divine Life in us. To deny our ſelves, to love God and our Neighbour, to forgive an Enemy, and do as we would be done by, to be deeply Humble, Holy, and Charitable, to live the life of Faith and Abſtraction from the World, and Reſignation to the Will of God; theſe are the great things that God hath laid upon us; theſe are the great things of Religion; things of a ſteady, of an eternal Goodneſs and Truth, and placed beyond Diſpute and Controverſie. If we do theſe things we ſhall never fail; but if we neglect theſe things, and entertain our ſelves with ſmall matters, that are in their own nature neither good nor evil, that neither obſtruct nor advance the Divine Likeneſs in us; we have but a Phariſaical Righteouſneſs at beſt, and however we may flatter God, we love him not. We are much deceived if we think we can by our Zeal for theſe things prevail with God to diſpenſe with us as to the greater things of the Law; for there is no diſpenſing with *Judgment and the Love of God.* Others are earneſtly zealous againſt theſe ſmaller things of Ceremonies or Modes of Worſhip; and though they pleaſe themſelves that in this they depart from the Phariſees,

riſees, yet they may after all be Phariſaical and Superſtitious alſo; for there is not only a poſitive but a negative Superſtition: There is a Superſtition in *Opinion* as well as *Practice*. *In Chriſt Jeſus neither Circumciſion nor Uncircumciſion availeth, but Faith which worketh by Love.* He that is afraid of a Ceremony, and is not afraid of raſh Anger, or Cenſuring, of an idle word or a fooliſh thought, or any known ſin, this man's Righteouſneſs does not exceed that of the Phariſees; but he is like thoſe *Jews* who pretended they were afraid of going into the Judgment Hall, leaſt they ſhould be defiled againſt the Paſſover, but at the ſame time were not afraid of delivering up our Bleſſed Saviour to Death, and chooſing a Robber before him.

Gal. 5. 6.

John 18. 28, 40.

2. The Scribes and Phariſees complyed fair with the Letter of the Law, but not with the Spiritual meaning of it. They are fitly compared by our Saviour *to whited Sepulchres, that are beautiful to look upon, but yet within are full of dead mens bones and corruption*; their Religion was a meer outſide; they were fairly painted over and coloured, but their Souls were not throughly dyed and impregnated with the love of God and

Matt. 23. 27.

and of his Commandments. The ſenſe of their Credit and Reputation, the force of their natural Conſcience, and of their ingenuous Education, would not allow them in the more open and ſcandalous Offences, and direct violations of the Letter of the Law: ſuch Sins as theſe were chaſed from the ſurface or outſide of their Converſation; when in the mean time their Hearts were full of Uncleanneſs. *We* deteſt Drunkenneſs, Profane Swearing, and Adultery; Fear and Shame will not allow thoſe foul blots in the outſide of our Converſation; but all this while we are but Skirmiſhers in our Religious Warfare, like men that only ſtorm the Out-works, or Suburbs, if the inward Fort of our Hearts be ſtrongly defended by Pride, or Malice, or Diſcontent, or any other mental Sins. We will not ſhed our Brother's Blood, *that* is an heinous and crying Crime; but if we hate him, or do not forgive and love him, we come ſhort of the Goſpel Righteouſneſs. By the Law of *Chriſt*, he that *hates* his Brother is a *Murderer*, and he that calls him *Fool* is *in danger of Hell-fire*. We are ready to ſay with the *Young Man* in the Goſpel, after he heard the Commandments repeated,

1 John 3. 15.

Matt. 5. 22.

Matt. 19. Luke 18. peated, *All these things have I kept from my youth*; or with the Pharisee, that we are no *Adulterers*, *Extortioners*, or *Unjust* Persons. And indeed were nothing Murder but the actual shedding our Brother's Blood; nothing Adultery but the violation of anothers Chastity; I hope we might, generally speaking, acquit our selves: But if he that *hates* his Brother be a *Murderer*, and he that *looks on a Woman to lust after* her be an *Adulterer*, I fear there are too many Criminals. We are not Unjust, nor were the Pharisees; but can we *sell all we have, and give to the poor*, when our Lord requires it? We are not Adulterers in the Letter of the Law; but are we afraid of an unchast Thought? We do not praise our selves upon an open Stage or Theatre; but are we not transported with popular breath, or swell'd with a Timpany of Pride and Vanity? We do not *Steal*, but do we not *Covet* neither? We oppress not, 'tis well; but are we *Merciful*, *as our heavenly Father is Merciful*? We do not *forswear* our selves; but do we *not swear at all*, in our ordinary Communication? You *do* no Injuries, but can you *forgive* them? You do not *grind the face of the poor*, but

Matth. 5. 22, 28.

but do you *viſit the Fatherleſs and Widow in their Affliction?* You would not oppreſs your Enemy, but can you relieve his wants? You would not betray your Lord for pieces of Silver, but can you part with your Life for his ſake? If we go not thus far we are ſhort of the Evangelical Righteouſneſs, and but *almoſt* Chriſtians; and 'twill be but ſmall comfort hereafter, that we are almoſt ſaved. Jam. 1. 27. Rom. 12. 20.

3. The Phariſees were in this defective, that what good things they did, they did them to be *ſeen* of Men. This was the end of their frequent *Faſting*, their long *Prayers*, of their broad *Phylacteries*, and enlarged *Borders* of their Garments, of their exact Tything, and their repeated *Waſhings*. This ſpoiled all their good Works: They were not content with the Teſtimony of God and of their own Conſcience. Our Lord would have us be ſecret in our Alms, and Prayers, and Faſtings; to avoid popular applauſe. He recommended this to us by his Example as well as Doctrine. We are no better than the Phariſees, if we proclaim our Devotion, oſtentate our Zeal, and *blow a Trumpet* when we do a good Work. The true Diſciple of Matt. 6. & ch. 23. 5.

Rom. 2. 29. *Jesus* is *inwardly* and in *secret* what his Profession obligeth him to. He seeks
1 Pet. 3. 5. not his *own Glory*, but that of his great Lord and *Master*. He looks upon popular Praise and Fame as empty and uncertain as the Wind, that blows when and where it listeth; he thinks it great folly to forfeit his Reward in another World, for the popular praise of this. He very well knows, that when he serves God he serves a good Master, that hears his Prayers, and sees his Alms, and knows his Thoughts; and desires to approve himself to *Him that sees in secret, and will reward him openly.* Do we do good in secret? can we say, when we have *done all*, that *we are unprofitable Servants?* Had we much rather be good than appear to be so? Do we set light by popular Praise? And are we well content with the Approbation of God and Witness of our Conscience? The Pharisees did many good things; but the Glory which was only due to God they derived to themselves.

I shall now proceed to make some *Application* of what hath been said.

1. If these things be so, then let us not flatter our selves; *any* degree of Righteous-

Righteouſneſs will not carry us to Heaven. We are forward enough to comply with *Solomon's* words, *Be not Righteous overmuch.* Eccl. 7.16. We are not forward to over-do. We are jealous leſt God and Religion ſhould prevail too far upon us; but let us remember our Saviour's words, *What do we more than others?* The Mat. 5.47. Scribes and Phariſees bid fair, and yet our Saviour tells us, that *except our Righteouſneſs exceeds theirs, we ſhall in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* 'Twill be happy for us, if we do not deceive our ſelves in this matter: We muſt do more than any Hypocrite can do. We may eaſily deceive our ſelves and others, and paſs into another World with falſe Hopes and Expectations about us.

2. We may learn hence the deplorable condition of them who *come ſhort* of the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees. *If the Righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the Sinner and Ungodly appear?* If theſe Men who faſted and prayed, and ſtudyed the Law, &c. were not ſafe, what will become of them that neither *fear God, nor regard Man?* If theſe *green Trees* be not out of danger, what will become of the *dry?* How ſad

is the ſtate of Oppreſſors, of the prophane Swearers, of the Drunkard, and the ſenſual Epicure? What hope can theſe men have, who live in thoſe ſins which call down *the Wrath of God upon the Children of Diſobedience?* *Hear this all ye that forget God; leſt I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.*

Pſ. 50. 22.

3. We may hence learn, that there are *other* ſins will keep us out of the Kingdom of Heaven, beſides *ſcandalous Sins* and *open Prophaneneſs*. The *Phariſees* are no where noted for Adultery, Extortion, and other ſcandalous Sins. 'Tis agreed on all hands, that ſuch Sinners are far from the Kingdom of Heaven: Theſe Sins *go before to Judgment*, and do declare aloud to what Kingdom they belong. But as *open* Sins will exclude us from the Kingdom of Heaven, ſo will *mental* and *ſecret* Sins alſo; there are *Spiritual Wickedneſſes*, and a *Wiſdom* (ſuch as it is) that is not only *Earthly*, *Senſual*, but *Deviliſh* alſo. This is a matter that deſerves a moſt ſerious Conſideration; we are ready to flatter our ſelves, becauſe we can truly ſay with the *Phariſee*, that we are not guilty of *Adultery*, *Extortion*, or *Injuſtice*, It is no Argument that we are in a ſafe condition

1 Tim. 5. 24.

Jam. 3. 15.

dition

dition becauſe we are better than the worſt: Tho' the *World* cannot condemn us, *God* juſtly may: We are not puniſhable by the Laws of Men, but are not therefore ſafe. The Laws of Men cannot puniſh every Sin, nor do they deſign it; nor is it fit they ſhould. When the Apoſtle gives in Rolls, or Catalogues of thoſe Sins which will exclude Men from the Kingdom of Heaven, he does not only name *open* and *ſcandalous* Sins, ſuch as Adultery, Idolatry, Sedition, Murder, Theft, Drunkenneſs; but more *ſecret* ones, ſuch as Hatred, Emulation, Wrath, Hereſie, Envy, Effeminacy, and Covetouſneſs: If we are not excluded Heaven by Idolatry, Theft, or Murder, we may be kept out by Hatred and by Covetouſneſs, by Envy or by Hereſie. 'Tis of little moment which way we die, whether by a Violent or Chronical Diſeaſe; and if our Veſſel muſt be *ſunk*, 'tis very little difference whether ſhe ſink by a *Broad-ſide*, or a *Leak*. Secret Malice, Pride, Covetouſneſs will as *certainly* deſtroy us, as Idolatry and Murder: All the difference is, that one way makes a greater noiſe than the other. In a word, we may not be ſcandalous Sinners, and yet we may be far from

Gal. 6. 19, 20, 21. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.

Heaven; and ſo we are, if we trifle, and have only a *form of Godlineſs*: I add, if we be not *born again*, and become *new Creatures*, we ſhall *never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

4. We may hence learn, not to be *over-confident* as to our ſtate; let us, at leaſt, *work out our Salvation with fear and trembling.* 'Tis poſſible for Men to be *ſecure* when they are not *ſafe*; to be Orthodox in Faith, and not ſcandalous in Manners; and yet come ſhort of the Kingdom of Heaven. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* were not ſhort in a good Opinion of themſelves; and I fear there are too many *Chriſtians* whoſe Confidence outruns their Grace: They are perhaps of a ſtrict Sect, of a ſober Life, or Members of an excellent Church, that comes near the Primitive Pattern; they fail not to obſerve the Conſtitutions of their Guide, and to live unblameably as to the ſight of the World; all this is well, but let us however *fear, leſt a promiſe being left of entring into* our Heavenly *reſt, we ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.* Let us fear leſt we ſhould be found too *light* when we are placed in the *Scale.* We are ſtill ſhort of Heaven, let us behave our ſelves

with

with that Reverence that becomes our ſtate; and when we *ſtand*, it will become us to *take heed leſt we fall*. The *natural Branches are broken off*; 'tis *by Faith we ſtand*; let us *not be high minded, but fear*. 1 Cor. 11. 12, Rom. 11. 20.

5. Hence we may be ſtirred up to look after a Righteouſneſs which does *exceed that of the Scribes and Phariſees*. Let us not be content with that Godlineſs which will not ſave our Souls. I well know how jealous we are generally, leſt God and Religion ſhould take up our whole man: We are for a *Competency of Religion*; we are content with ſo much as will ſave our Fame, and ſecure our worldly Intereſt; and are too apt to ſet Bounds to it, and ſay, *hitherto it ſhall come and no farther*. I muſt however crave leave, at leaſt, to name what are thoſe *Impediments* which detain us in a *Phariſaical*, and hinder us from arriving at that *Evangelical* Righteouſneſs which is indiſpenſibly neceſſary to the Salvation of our Souls: And they are reducible to the following *Heads*.

1. An Opinion that Chriſt appeared only to procure our Indemnity, without deſigning to beget and advance in us

us the Divine Image and Life. *We do* indeed *believe*, and maintain against the followers of *Socinus*, that Christ died in our place and stead; and by his Death made Expiation for our Sins, and Satisfaction to the Divine Justice: But then we *do* also *believe* that he designed to deliver us from the *power* of our Sins, as well as from the *punishment* due to them; else would the Gospel patronize our Sloth; and Christ have purchased for us an exemption from an holy Life; which to affirm, would be to *turn the Grace of God into Wantonness*. If we credit the *H. Scriptures*, we *shall* believe that *Christ* appeared, not only to deliver us from the *punishment*, but from the *power* of our Sins. He was called *Jesus*, because he was to *save his People from their Sins*; not barely from the *Punishment*, but especially, and in the first place, from the *Dominion*, and from the *Power* of them. *He was manifested to take away our Sins*; not barely to procure our *Indemnity*; it follows, *He that committeth Sin is of the Devil*: Here by *Sin* is meant the *fault* not the *punishment*; and then it follows, *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.*

Matt. 1. 21. with Luk. 1. 74, 75.

2 John 3. 5, 8.

This

This Jesus *did*, not only by dispossessing the Devil, and casting him out of the *Bodies* of Men, by stopping his Mouth in the *Oracles*; but by casting him out of mens *Souls*. *Jesus* came to cast out of those who were his Disciples, the diabolical Spirit, of *Pride*, *Malice*, *Lying*, *Revenge*, &c. and to make them *Peaceable*, *Humble*, *Meek* and *Merciful*. It would have been a *small* Conquest, to have turn'd him out of the *Bodies* of men, and left him in their *Souls*; to have turned him out of the *Idol-Temples*, and to have let him dwell in the *Hearts* of men. Can any man believe, that *Jesus* barely designed to take away the *Guilt* and not the *Power* of *Sin*, when the latter is *fons & origo mali*, the Original Evil? This would be as if a Physician should only project to deliver his Patient from some sad Symptoms of his Disease, instead of removing the Morbifick Matter, which is the cause of all those astonishing Symptoms which attend upon the Disease of his Patient. Christ came to destroy the Spirit and Nature of the Devil out of mens Hearts, and to restore men to the image and likeness of God. This was the Design, not only of his Life and Doctrine, but

of

of his Death and Sufferings also; as the Holy Scriptures do inform us.

2 Pet. 4. 1, 2. Rom. 6. 3, 4. 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. Tit. 2. 13. Gal. 1. 4.

2. A placing Religion in something that is External, or short of it; *e. g.* in some Opinion, in the use or forbearance of Rites and Modes of Worship; or the being of some certain Sect or Separation; or the bare use of the means of Religion. Thus was the Pharisee entangled and held fast; and by such things many titular Christians are hindred from rising to the great things of Religion. It is not to be imagined, those men that are thus entangled, should ever grow to any greater stature than these things advance them to; and if they continue thus bound up, they will be but *Dwarfs* in Religion for ever. We are too fond of our Opinions, and frequently mistaken in them; and the truth is, as to some of them, 'tis not very material, to the main and direct purposes of the Gospel, whether we be in the right or in the wrong. The Religion of *Jesus* is too great to consist in such things as these: His coming had more of Love and Moment than these little things import: He came to ransome Souls, and to bring men back to God; to reduce the Wandring to the *great Shepherd*:

And

And he that thinks he complies with his Saviour's Deſign, by being of a Party, or diſputable Opinion, he does debaſe his *Religion* firſt, and then his *Saviour*; as if he had been at all his Coſt and Pains for things comparatively little. The Holy Scripture gives us other Leſſons: *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly*, &c. And again, *The Kingdom of God is not Meats and Drinks, but Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* And, *It is a good thing that the Heart be eſtabliſhed with Grace, and not with Meats; which have not profited them which have been occupied therein.* Rom. 2. 28. and ch. 14. 17. Heb. 13. 9.

3. A judging of our ſtate towards God by falſe Meaſures; by the bare *Letter* of the Law, or the *Example* of others. *I thank thee that I am not as other men,* ſays the Phariſee: He thought himſelf ſomething becauſe he was better than the worſt of men. We may outſtrip many others, and not be ſafe our ſelves, and not offend againſt the *Letter* of the Law, when we do not come up to the *Spiritual Meaning* of it. It concerns us greatly to make ſure of our future Happineſs; and ſince a *Promiſe is left us of entring into* an Eternal *Reſt*, we ought to take great care, that we do not ſo much Luke 18. 11.

much as *ſeem to come ſhort of it. That this bleſſed Reſt may be our Portion in another and better World, God of his infinite Mercy grant, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake; to whom, with the Father, and Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour and Glory, now and for ever.* Amen.

SER-

SERMON II.

Preached before the

L^d. MAYOR

AT

St. *Mary-le-Bow*,

May the 29th. 1689.

PSALM XLVII. 7.

For God is the King of all the Earth: Sing ye Praiſes with Underſtanding.

I Shall not ſpend any time in an enquiry after the *Compoſer*, firſt *Occaſion*, and *Deſign* of this *Pſalm*. It is enough to my preſent purpoſe, to look back to the preceding Verſe, which contains an Invitation to praiſe God. *Sing praiſes to God, ſing praiſes; ſing praiſes unto our King, ſing praiſes:* It follows, *For God is the*, &c. The words contain an excellent

lent *Duty*, *Sing ye praiſes with Underſtanding*: And the *Ground* on which 'tis built, *For God is the King of all the Earth*. Here is in theſe words both *Doctrine* and *Uſe*. The *Doctrine* is a principal one, and of great moment: *God is King*; not of a particular Country only, but *of all the Earth*: The *Uſe* of it is, that we ſhould *praiſe him*; and that not with Words only, and Formality, but *with Underſtanding*.

I ſhall proceed in this Method.

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew how theſe words, *God* is a *King*, are to be underſtood.

Secondly, I ſhall lay before you ſome remarkable Inſtances and Proofs of his Providence and Government.

Thirdly, I ſhall make ſome *Uſe* of this *Doctrine*; where I ſhall particularly conſider the *Uſe* which the *words* commend: *Sing ye Praiſes with Underſtanding*.

I. How theſe words, *God is a King*, are to be underſtood. They teach us God's Soveraignty, his Power and Authority. He made the World, and gave it Laws, and upholds and governs it ſtill. This Government of his is either more

more *common* and *general*, of the whole Creation, both of Heaven and Earth: Or 'tis more *ſpecial*, as it relates to the Moral World; and more particularly to Men, over whom God not only rules, but doth exerciſe a more Special Providence.

1. Let us conſider God's *General Government* over the whole Creation. All things in Heaven and Earth are at his beck and command: By him they are directed to their end; from him they receive the Laws of their Nature, their Inſtincts and Inclinations, their Propenſities and Obediential Powers, their Sagacities and Springs of Motion. By him they are applyed to their ſeveral Objects, bounded and limited in their Operations, and confined as to their ſeveral Powers.

The Heavens were by Him *extended as a Curtain, and ſpread as a Tent to dwell in.* He adorned them with Luminaries and Stars, and ſtored them with a mighty Hoſt. He opens and ſhuts them as he pleaſeth, and *gives them a Law which they cannot paſs.* Their Motion and Harmony, their ſtupendious Symmetry and Order, is all from God. The *Angels* are his *Miniſtring Spirits.* Iſai. 40.22. James 5.

Pſal. 148. *Praiſe ye him Sun and Moon; praiſe him all ye Stars of light. Praiſe ye him Heavens of Heavens, and ye Waters that be above the Heavens. Let them praiſe the Name of the Lord; for he commanded and they were created. He hath alſo ſtabliſhed them for ever and ever. He hath made a Decree which ſhall not paſs.*

And all things under the higheſt Heavens are at his Command alſo. Thoſe things that ſeem the moſt looſe and ungovernable, the moſt caſual and uncertain: The Meteors, and the Winds, which are ſuppoſed to blow when and where they liſt. The Storms and Tempeſts, as raging as they are, are ſubject to him. *He giveth Snow like Wool:*

Pſ. 147.16. *He ſcattereth the Hoar Froſt like Aſhes. Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapour, and*

Pſ. 148. 8. *ſtormy Wind fulfilling his Word.*

And ſo are all inferior Creatures; the Earth and Sea and all their Productions and their Store: The Fowls, the Beaſts, and Fiſh have not only their Being, but their Food from him, and their Laws alſo. He governs them all; gives them their Sagacity, by which they provide for themſelves; their Powers and Inclinations by which they preſerve their Kind. The Earth he hath founded, and

faſtned

fastned its Globe. The Sea he determines and bounds; and sets Laws to its *proudest Waves*, which it *cannot passe*.

All Creatures are Subjects to this Kingdom of God, and do his Will. The Sun runs his course, the Rivers flow, and all other Creatures do the work which he allotted them, and obey his Laws. By *Nature* we mean the Law of their Creation; 'tis no more than this. *That* appears from hence, that God hath sometime crossed the Laws of Nature, and made it evident that the Law came from him, in that he suspended its Execution. What Creature is there among them all, but hath obeyed his Will, and forsaken, at his Command, its natural course? This they have done when God hath thought it conducing to his own Glory and the good of Men.

He hath *shut up the Heavens* for *three* Jam. 5. 17.
Years and an half upon the Prayer of a Prophet; and at another time *opened* Gen. 7.
the Windows of them for *forty days* together to *drown* an ungodly *World*. The *Sun*, *like a Gyant*, fails not to *run his course*: But yet he hath *stopped* it upon the *Prayer* of *one* of his *Servants* for the Josh 10.
space of a *whole day* together, and *brought it back* for the sake of a *good* Isai. 38.

King; and contrary to the Laws of Nature, hath ſometime *eclipſed* that great
Matth. 27. Luminary when the *Moon* hath been at
1 Sam. 12. *the Full.* He ſends *Thunder and Rain* at
17, 18. a *fair Seaſon*, upon the account of a
Gen. 19. *good Prophet*; and *rains down Fire and Brimſtone* to puniſh *Incorrigible Sin-*
2 King. 1. *ners*; and at another time, *ſends Fire from Heaven* upon the account of *ano-*
Exod. 14. *ther Prophet.* He *divides* the *Sea*, *dries*
Joſh. 3. up *Jordan*, *parts* its *Waters* with a *Pro-*
2 King. 2. *phet's Mantle.* He *reſtains* the *Fire*, that
Dan. 3. angry and raging Element, that it neither ſcorcheth, or ſingeth, or hurts his
Exod. 17. Servants. The ſtroke of a *Rod*, when he will have it ſo, ſhall *open* the hard
Num. 20. *Rock*; and that Rock ſhall give *Water*,
1 Cor. 10. and that *Water* ſhall *follow* the *Marches* of *his People.* And when he pleaſeth,
2 King. 6. *Iron* ſhall *ſwim*, the *Earth* ſhall open its
Num. 16. *Mouth*: a *Fiſh* ſhall *ſwallow* a *Prophet*,
Jonah 2. and *reſtore* him *alive*, and the moſt *ſtu-*
Num. 23. *pid* Animal ſhall *ſpeak*; and the *greedy*
1 King. 17. *Ravens* ſhall *feed* an hungry *Prophet.* He
Jonah 4. can raiſe a *Gourd* of a ſuddain, to *ſhelter* his *Servant.* The *Sea* and *Winds obey him*; and the *Grave* at *his* command, *gives up the Dead.* Theſe things He hath done; and given proofs undeniable, that he governs the World.

And

And we ſhall hereafter have greater Aſſurances of it, when the Frame of the Creation ſhall be taken down, *before that great and terrible day:* When *the Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, the Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat; the Earth alſo, and the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up; and all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved: When the Heavens ſhall wax old as a Garment, and as a Veſture ſhall be folded up and changed.* Becauſe we ſee things go on in a conſtant courſe, we are apt to ſay, *Where is the promiſe of his coming? For ſince the Fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation.* But when God comes to take Vengeance of Evil Men, and deſtroy the Heaven and Earth, then 'twill be evident, that *he* ſupported this viſible Frame of Things; and that as they receiv'd their *Being*, ſo they receiv'd their *Laws* from *Him* too. The melting down the Heavens, and Conflagration of the Earth, and diſſolving this Fabrick, will be a Teſtimony beyond Exception.

2 Pet. 3. 10, 11.

Heb. 1.

2 Pet. 3, 4.

2. Let us conſider God's *ſpecial* Government of the *Moral World*. *God is King* (ſays my Text) *of all the Earth.* I ſhall not ſpeak of God's governing the

Angels; both because we understand but little of that matter, and that my Words determine me to apply my self to the consideration of God's Providence over *Mankind*: And if he take *care of Oxen*, and concern himself about the *smallest* of his Creatures; if he govern things that have no life, and the Winds and Sea that have no determinate Law, we have cause to believe that *Mankind* is under his *special* Government and care: And so we are.

He gives us a Law: one in our *Hearts*; and a *written one* he hath also given: He observes our Actions, knows our Thoughts, and will judge us according to our Works.

II. I shall lay before you some remarkable Instances and Proofs of this more *especial* Providence and Government of God. And that I shall do in the following *Particulars*.

1. God does often defeat the cunning Plots of crafty and ill-designing Men, and renders their deepest and best-laid Counsels abortive. This is a clear proof that God governs the World. And if we are not convinc'd by this means, 'tis because we do not observe and well consider

ſider the Work of God. Miracles are an allowed proof of a Divine Providence; and yet there is not more of God in *them* than in *this*. *They*, indeed, ſtrike our *Senſes* more, and therefore we are more *affected* with *them*; but then *this* is as *true* a *proof* of the Care and Providence of God.

So it is: God defeats the Cunning and Wit of Man: *A man's Heart deviſeth his way; but the Lord directeth his ſteps.* Our Plots and Contrivances (how well ſoever laid) do not ſucceed without God. *There are many Devices in a man's Heart, nevertheleſs the Counſel of the Lord that ſhall ſtand.* How often have the Crafty been defeated, how often entangled in their own Counſels! I reckon there was not more of God in delivering the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, where yet many Miracles were wrought, than in ſaving the *Jews* in the days of *Mordecai*. The whole Nation was then devoted to Deſtruction, by the Malice of a great Courtier, and the Decree of a powerful Prince. They were ſaved, indeed, but it was God's doing; all things elſe conſpired to their ruin. Their caſe ſeemed without all hope; and their deliverance proclaimed the watchful Eye

Prov. 16. 9.

Prov. 19. 21.

of Heaven. *Joseph* was to be a great Man, God had determined it should be so: But so it was, that he was by Envy sold and sent a Slave into *Egypt*; he lived a Servant there, and was imprisoned by a Lye; but his very Imprisonment was the occasion of his Advancement, his Suffering a step to his Preferment. *Moses* was design'd by God to be the Deliverer and Law-giver of his People; and so he was: notwithstanding, he was cast in his Infancy upon the Waters; and after that, brought up in the Court of *Pharaoh*, and in the Learning of the *Egyptians*; and after this, forced to fly his Country. The *Egyptians* used Craft and added Cruelty to extirpate *Israel*; they harrassed the *Fathers*, and appointed the *Male Infants* to be destroyed; they wearied them and cut them off, and yet they grew the faster. The ruin of the first *Christians* was design'd by the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and yet they continued and multiplyed, maugre all the Craft and Force of a powerful and enraged World. And the *Reformed Religion* is still *preserved* after the utmost Contrivances of the *Roman Church*: After Massacres and Invasions, Plots and Conspiracies, Fire and Faggot,

Faggot, and the ſevereſt Cruelties of its Enemies. And I doubt not but 'twill ſtill continue, after all endeavours to root it out. What ſhall we ſay? If God be for us, we ſhall not need to fear the Malice, or the Craft of Men, or Devils. If God will preſerve *David*, the Counſel of *Achitophel* ſhall not hurt him. *The Heathen* may *rage*, and *the Rulers take Counſel together, againſt the Lord, and againſt his anointed:* but all this to no purpoſe, whiles *He that ſitteth in the Heavens laughs, and the Lord hath them in deriſion.* God hath given us of this Kingdom abundant proof of this kind, of his over-ruling Providence. *If it had not been the Lord, who was on our ſide, when men roſe up againſt us; then they had ſwallowed us up quick, when their Wrath was kindled againſt us: Then the Waters had over-whelmed us, the Stream had gone over our Soul. Bleſſed be the Lord, who hath not given us a prey to their Teeth.*

2. God over-rules the moſt caſual and contingent things, the moſt looſe and uncertain. Things ſeem to run upon *Wheels*; and ſo indeed they do; but there are *Eyes* in thoſe *Wheels*, and an *Hand* that directs their motion. The Pro-

Providence of God is concerned in those Events which seem to us the most contingent and casual. What more uncertain than a *Lottery*? And yet says *Solomon*, *The Lot is cast into the Lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.* *Achan* found it so, and so did the Prophet *Jonah*. What more uncertain and unconstant than the Wind? It seems to be under no Law, or Limits; it blows when and where it listeth: And yet this *fulfills God's word*, or Purpose, and is the instrument of his Anger, or his Kindness. An *East-wind* brings the *Locusts*, and a *West-wind* removes them. The *Winds* obey the great Governour of the World: He that *walks upon the wings of the Wind*, *He* directs its motion; and accomplisheth his Decrees and Purpose, by that which seems the most variable and unlimited thing in the World. He that is *casually* killed, is said to be *delivered* by God into the Hands of him that killed him. God over-rules what we call *Chance*; and the *Arrow* that was shot at *all adventures*, was, by the Providence of God, directed to *Ahab*. When the Instrument is blind, there's an unseen Hand that directs it; and what seems to us casual is pre-determined by God.

Prov. 16. 33.

Pf. 148. 8.

Exod. 10. 13, 19.

Evod. 21. 13.

No-

Nothing is more uncertain than a *man's choice*, or the *Favour* of a *Prince*; but a Divine Providence preſides even *here*. *The King's Heart is in the Hand of the Lord; as the Rivers of Water, he turneth it whitherſoever he will.* Prov. 21. 1. God brings his Purpoſes to paſs, by ways and methods that ſeem to us very unlikely and hazardous. And his Enemies contribute to bring his Decrees to paſs; and thoſe Creatures who do not know his Will, fail not to do it. He directs the Creature that is blind, to execute his Purpoſe; and he brings it to paſs by them who deſign nothing leſs. When God determines that a thing ſhall come to paſs, nothing can hinder it. His Purpoſe ſhall ſtand whatever Difficulties or Contingencies lye in the way between it and the Event.

'Twere eaſie to give many Inſtances of this over-ruling Providence of God. I ſhall content my ſelf with that which happened by the determinate Counſel of God to our *Bleſſed Saviour*. What God had decreed and predicted did come to paſs, whatever Difficulties and Contingencies lay in the way. He *was to be* born at *Bethlehem*, and there he *was* born. But 'twas not likely he ſhould; for he

was

was conceived at *Nazareth*; and 'twas a Decree of *Auguſtus Cæſar*, who contributed unwittingly to fulfil the *Divine Decree*, that was the *occaſion* of his being born *there*. He *was to be* born of a *Virgin*, and ſo he was; but ſhe was ſo near her *Marriage*, that ſhe was *eſpouſed* to *Joſeph*. He was to go into *Egypt*, and to dwell in *Galilee*; but the Cruelty of *Herod* and Reign of *Archelaus*, *occaſioned* the *one* and the *other*. He was to be *Crucified*, and to be *honourably interred*; and ſo he was; and yet *Crucifixion* was none of the *Jewiſh* capital Puniſhments; and *Burial*, much leſs an *honourable* one, was not allowed to thoſe who ſuffered *that kind* of death. That he *drank Vinegar*, and his *bones* were *not broken*; that he not only *roſe* from the *dead*, but that his *Reſurrection* was *believed*; and that belief *ſpread*, did ſo come to paſs, that they lowdly proclaim the over-ruling Providence of God.

3. God brings great things to paſs by ſmall and unlikely means. This God hath frequently done, and thereby given proof of his over-ruling Providence.

He that made all things out of nothing, and the greateſt Harmony and Symmetry out of a confuſed Chaos, hath ſince

ſince that effected great things, by means that were very unlikely and diſproportionate. Abundant proofs we have to this purpoſe, not only from Holy Scripture, and other Records, but alſo from our daily Experience. When God deſigns the *fall of a City*, it ſhall fall at the *ſound of Rams-horns*; and when he deſigned the *deſtruction* of the *numerous Army* of *Midian*, he effected it by a *few* fearful and timorous Men. A *Stripling* with a *Sling* ſhall kill the mighty *Philiſtine*. A *Woman* or a ſingle *Nazarite* ſhall be able to deſtroy great numbers of the Enemies of God's People; or when God pleaſeth, the Enemy ſhall fall by his own *fears*. On the other hand, when God's People forſake him, God delivers a *great Hoſt* of them to a *ſmall Company* of the *Syrians*. God does ſometimes *ſtrengthen the Spoiled againſt the Strong*. *God* was the *ſtrength* of *his People*; when *he* departs from them, *any thing* is ſtrong enough to overcome them. Thus he tells the *Jews*, *Though ye had ſmitten the whole Army of the* Chaldeans *that fight againſt you, and there remained but wounded Men amongſt them; yet ſhould they riſe up every Man in his Tent, and burn this City with Fire.*

2 Chron. 24. 24.

Amos 5 9.

Jer. 37. 9. 10.

We

We make great provisions for War; and yet, *no King is saved by the multitude of an Host; nor any mighty Man delivered by much strength. An Horse is a vain thing for safety, nor shall he deliver any by his great strength.*

Ps. 33. 16.

Great things have been done, and many things of great use to the World have been found out: But in these, little, many times, have *Men* been concerned: These things have so happened, that there hath been no room for boasting of our Wit and Skill. God hath taken care, by choosing things that are *foolish and weak, base and despised, to confound the wise and the mighty*; and *things that are not to bring to nought things that are*; and so to provide that *no flesh should glory in his presence.* God hath cast contempt upon what foolish men *admire*; upon Humane Force and Craft, upon pompous Preparations, upon what we value and rely upon. When he sent the *Messias*, he came not like a Prince; he appeared as the Son of a poor Maid, and the reputed Son of a Carpenter. The *Apostles* that converted the World were no Princes of the Blood, no Orators, nor dignify'd persons; but obscure and mean men, unfit to contrast with

1 Cor. 1. 27, &c.

with the Wit, and Malice, and Power of the *World*; and yet theſe poor *Galileans* were the men that God uſed to bring to paſs the mightieſt things.

4. God makes his over-ruling Providence to appear, in his making uſe of the Sins and Follies of men, and bringing good out of them. He does not only limit and reſtrain the Wrath of evil men, and ſet bounds beyond which they cannot paſs, but knows how to bring good out of the worſt of things. He that brought *Light* out of *Darkneſs*, can bring *Good* out of *Evil*. The *Crucifying* our *Saviour* was a great *Sin* in the contrivers and abettors; but it confirmed ancient *Prophecies*, and contributed to the *Salvation* of Mankind. God hath conveyed many *Bleſſings* to his Servants this way. He hath *excluded boaſting* from men; who have been guilty, even then when they have been occaſions of the greateſt good. *Joſeph* was ſold by Malice, and impriſoned by a Lye; but this proved for the good of him and his Father's Houſe. *Ye thought evil againſt me* (ſays he to his Brethren) *but God meant it unto good; to bring to paſs, as it is this day, to ſave much people alive.* Gen. 50. 20. *Herod's* ſlaughter of the Infants proclaimed

claimed the Birth of *Jesus*. The innocent *Blood of Martyrs* proved the *Seed of the Church*. The faults of men have been of great advantage to God's Elect.
Acts 8. The Persecution at *Jerusalem* was the occasion of spreading the Gospel; and
ch. 15. 36. the contest between *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and their parting, contributed to the same End. *Peter*'s denyal was a great Sin; but yet, *felicius ille cecidit quam alii steterunt*. It is of great use to others.
Phil. 1. 12. The hardships laid upon St. *Paul* were for the furtherance of the *Gospel*. There
v. 18. 19. were those that *preached Christ out of envy and strife*; yet St. *Paul* says, *I know that this shall turn to my Salvation, through your Prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*. The *Heresies* in the *Primitive Church* were great *E-*
1 Cor. 11. 19. *vils*; but were also, through God's over-ruling Providence, *occasions* of much *Good*. Good men were by this means *made manifest*, excited to defend the Truth, and study the Holy Scriptures; and to this occasion we owe many excellent Works of the *Ancients*. Besides, both the *Hereticks* and *Orthodox* appealing to the *Scriptures*, and having a jealous Eye upon one another, we have a competent assurance that those Holy

Books

Books neither were nor could be corrupted. The ſale of *Pardons* and *Indulgencies* occaſioned the *Reformation* in *Germany*; and our own was effected by God's over-ruling Providence, by occaſions that were given from the intemperate Spirit of a Prince of our own. And perhaps nothing gave this *Reformed Religion* a deeper rooting than the Blood of the *Holy Martyrs*, which was ſhed in the days of Queen *Mary*.

5. In diſpoſing of Kings and Kingdoms, in ſetting up, or putting an end to the greateſt Monarchies and Governments. We cannot doubt of God's *ſpecial Providence* over *Kings*, who are his Vice-gerents; and he hath given great proof of his over-ruling Providence in this matter in the ſeveral Ages of the World. As the *Vices* of Monarchies have increaſed ſo hath their *Ruine* approached; nothing being a more certain preſage of their fall. We have not wanted in our Age and Country an illuſtrious proof of this Providence of God. When *for* our Sins, and *by* them too, he ſuffered an excellent King to be cut off, and the Royal Branches to be driven out of their Land, he found out a way to bring them back, without Blood, and

Violence: *He bowed the Hearts of the People, as one Man*; and endued them with a ſenſe of their duty. This we keep up the Memory of this day; and muſt needs acknowledge, that it was *God's doing*, and hath been *wonderful in*
Dan. 2.21. *our Eyes. He* did it, who *changeth the times and ſeaſons; removeth Kings, and ſetteth up Kings: To the intent that the Living may know, that the moſt High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and giveth it to whomſoever he will.* He lets us
Dan 4.17. know, that 'tis *by him that Kings reign*; and that *he is the King of all the Earth.*

6. In matters of War and Peace God's over-ruling Providence is to be ſeen. *Come,*
Pſal. 46. *behold the Works of the Lord, what deſolations he hath made in the Earth: He maketh Wars to ceaſe unto the end of the Earth: He breaketh the Bow, and cutteth the Spear in ſunder, he burneth the Chariot in the Fire.* There's hardly any thing more contingent than the Events of War; he that puts on his Harneſs can never promiſe himſelf the Victory. Counſels hold no proportions with Events; *God* gives Courage and Succeſs. This is not owing to Numbers and Proweſs: The ſame Counſels have often divers Effects. We may eaſily perceive that the Victo-

ry

ry is from God: *An Horſe is a vain thing*: And the Method which ſometimes *ſucceeds*, does at another time *fail*. The *Grecian* Monarch overcame by *ſpeed*, the *Roman* General by *delays*: The *Numbers* of the *Perſian* King left *Greece* without Succeſs, when *ſmall* Companies have overcome. Very often have *they* miſcarried who have waged War in their *Enemies Country*; and yet *Scipio* and *Hannibal* ſucceeded *that way*. We diſcourſe at random, when we promiſe our ſelves Succeſs from our Wiſdom and Preparations: God lets us know, that he rules the World. *Scilicet eſt aliud quod nos cogátque regátque majus, & in proprias ducat mortalia leges.* God ſtills the noiſe of the Sea, and the tumult of the People. And where *the Horſe is prepared for the Battel, Safety is from the Lord.*

7. God makes uſe of men to Purpoſes which they deſign not, and ſometimes to Purpoſes quite contrary to their Intentions: *Joſeph*'s Brethren deſigned his *ruin*; but what they did contributed to his *riſe*; his Miſtriſs occaſioned his *advancement* when ſhe deſign'd to *abaſe* him. The *Philiſtines* intended to reproach *Sampſon*, when they did but effect their own ruine: And when the

Philiſtin Lords rejected *David*, they occaſioned the reſcue of his Relatives. *Men* fulfill God's Counſels when they intend to defeat them. *If we let him alone* (ſays the *Jews* of *Jeſus*) *the* Romans *ſhall come and take away both our Place and Nation*; whereas, in truth, their Crucifying of *Jeſus* brought the *Romans* upon them. The *Perſecutors* of the Church did help to *increaſe* it: And we many times do *effect* that very thing which we *deſign* to *avoid*. *Divinum conſilium, dum devitatur, impletur.*

John 11. 48.

8. In doing things in the fitteſt Time and Seaſon. *There is a time for every purpoſe under the Heaven:* But tho' there be, yet *Man knoweth not his time: As the Fiſhes that are taken in an evil Net, and as the Birds that are caught in the Snare; ſo are the Sons of Men ſnared in an evil time.* And as we do *not know*, ſo 'tis *not fit* we *ſhould*. *It is not for us to know the times and ſeaſons, which the Father hath put in his own power.* As every *Word*, ſo every *Event* is good in its ſeaſon. *He hath* made every thing beautiful in his time. God's time is beſt, and he always chooſeth wiſely: We are fooliſh and raſh. The Mercy is double that is *well-timed:* God ſends us *opportune*

Eccl. 3. 1.

ch. 9. 12.

Act. 1. 7.

opportune help. He hath *mercy on Sion* when *the time* is to *favour*, when *the ſet time is come.* God never fails in that matter. The great Events that he hath brought about have been in their *ſeaſon.* When the *Bricks* were *doubled*, he ſent *Moſes*: In the *Wilderneſs* he gave the *Law*; when the People were brought from the *Idolatrous Egyptians*, and before they were entered upon the *borders* of the Land of *Canaan.* The *Saviours* of God's People were raiſed up in the fitteſt *ſeaſon.* *Then* was *Jonah* ſent to *Nineveh*: The *delay* in the *Whale's Belly* ſerved to contribute to the *force* of his *Miniſtry*, and *Salvation* of the *Ninevites.* Our *Lord* was ſent in the moſt *fit time*; and *then* was his Religion *planted.* He died too, in the *very time* which God had *foretold* by *Daniel* long before. God's Mercies, and his Judgments too, are in *due ſeaſon.* I ſhould be too long ſhould I enumerate Particulars.

Heb. 4. 16. Pſ. 102, 13. V. Abravenel in Pent. *f.* 168. Tit. 1. 3.

9. In his miraculous deliverance of his People, who *put their truſt in him.* He *never failed them* yet; not then when humane help failed, and all hope ſeemed to be taken away. There is a watchful Providence over the Servants of God. *The Eye of the Lord is upon*

P. 33. 18.

them that fear him, and upon them that hope in his mercy: To deliver their Soul from death and keep them alive in famine. The good man believes this; and this Faith ſupports him under all Events. *David* in his diſtreſs, and when the People were ready to ſtone him, *encouraged*
1 Sam. 30. 6. *himſelf in the Lord his God.* 'Twere eaſie to give many Inſtances to this purpoſe. I need not do it *here*, becauſe *ye* are Witneſſes of this Truth. God hath many times *delivered our Eyes from tears, our Feet from falling, and our Souls from death.* He hath delivered *this Kingdom* often; and did it *this day.* He hath delivered it from *Uſurpations*, and *many* Evils which we *felt*, and *more* that we *feared:* And *in him we truſt that he will ſtill deliver us.*

10. In his remarkable puniſhment of Sinners in this Life. There's much of *God* to be ſeen in this matter. God often contrives it ſo, that the Sinner may read his *fault* in his *puniſhment*: For the *puniſhment* often carries the marks and ſignatures of the *Sin* upon it. They that
Rev. 16. 5, 6. *ſhed* the *Blood of Saints* ſhall have *Blood given them to drink.* The Sinner ſometimes ſuffers in the *ſame inſtance* in which
Judg. 1. 7. he ſinned. *Adoni-bezek* was an Example of

of this; and ſo were the *Egyptians*, who commanded the Males of *Iſrael* to be *drowned*; and ſuffered in the *death* of their *Firſt-born*, and were *themſelves drowned* in the *Red-ſea*. At other times the *puniſhment* is very *like* the *fault*. The *unmerciful* man falls into *cruel* Hands; and he that *ſhewed* no pity, *finds* none. At other times the *ſubject matter* of the *Sin* appears in the *Puniſhment*. *They* were *burnt* who offered *ſtrange Fire*. Sometimes the very *time* and *place*, when and where the *Sin* was committed, is marked upon the *puniſhment*: The *Jews* found it ſo in the deſtruction of the *ſecond Temple*; to ſay nothing of what is remembred of *Ahab*. But to diſcourſe of this Argument would require a long time: We may conclude from what hath been ſaid, that *there is a God that judgeth in the Earth*.

III. I proceed to make ſome *Uſe* and *Application* of what hath been ſaid.

1. This Doctrine tends to quiet our Minds under all events of things; and to beget in us Tranquility, and a profound reſignation of our Wills to God's, whatever happens to us. If *God* govern the World, *it ſhall be well with them that fear* Eccl. 8. 12.

God. In this we may reſt aſſured; *All ſhall work together for their good.* A good man is *ſafe*, and nothing ſhall *harm* him: nay more, every Event ſhall *do* him *good.* He may not be able to comprehend the *Wiſdom* of this Providence; nor does he think God obliged to acquaint *him* with the *arcana Imperii*, the
Eccl. 3. 11. Secrets of his Government. *No man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.* I grant there are in the *works* of *Providence* (as well as in the *Scriptures*) *ſome things hard to be underſtood*: many things happen that are very ſtrange and ſurprizing. But could we ſee through the whole Scene of things at once, we ſhould diſcern a perfect Symmetry and Beauty where we now ſeem to eſpy a flaw. We muſt not think our ſelves wiſe enough to underſtand the meaning of God's Works. When we ſee *Oppreſſion and perverting of Judgment*, we muſt not therefore queſtion God's care; but remem-
Eccl. 5. 8. ber, that *he that is higher than the higheſt regardeth.* Does a *Tempeſt* ariſe and threaten us? be quiet and ſtill, God ſits *at Stern*; we are not left to Wind and Weather; he governs the Veſſel and ſets Laws to the proudeſt Waves. Thy Child

Child is not ſick, nor thy Friend dead, nor thy Goods periſhed without the knowledge of thy *Heavenly Father*. It becomes us to be quiet and ſtill, and to ſay as the *Pſalmiſt* does, *I opened not my Mouth, becauſe thou didſt it.*

2. Hence you may be exhorted to put your ſelves under this ſpecial Care and Providence of God. God hath a moſt particular care of good men, who *put their truſt in him*. He that is *King of all the Earth*, hath a ſpecial and watchful care over *them* that are *faithful*.

Nothing is more our *Duty*, or *Intereſt*, than what I exhort you to. 'Tis the wiſeſt thing you can do, and the moſt for your advantage. Do but this, and you may be ſecure as to all things elſe. If this be done no Evil can harm you; if not, no Proſperity can do you good. *Happy are that People whoſe God is the Lord.*

'Tis the Divine Favour and Providence that makes our condition valuable. 'Tis our only Security, the beſt of our Properties, and the moſt valuable thing whatſoever. If we are but once the peculiar care of Heaven, we have enough, we have all; there can be no lack of Wealth or Power, of Wiſdom or Honour:

Honour: 'Tis this exalts any Perſon or Nation. But then you muſt

Put your intire *truſt* in God. He that does this, *Mercy ſhall compaſs him about.*
Pſ. 32. 10. We muſt *commit our ſelves to God; caſt all our burden and care upon him.* We muſt abſtract our ſelves from our carnal Dependencies; we muſt not *lean to our own Underſtanding; not glory in our Might, and Wiſdom, and Riches; but in this alone, that we know God,* and intirely *truſt in him.*

And this we cannot be ſaid to do unleſs we *obey* his Laws. This is the way to own *him* as *our King,* who is indeed the *King of all the Earth.* If we expect his Protection we muſt keep his Laws; nor can we be ſaid to truſt in him, if we reject his Precepts.

And let us alſo put up fervent *Petitions* to him. If *he* be *King of all the Earth,* we are concerned to apply to him on all occaſions. We are ambitious of the Ear of an *Earthly Prince,* and when we have gained it we uſe it to our own advantage. 'Tis more our Duty and our Intereſt to addreſs to this *King of all the Earth;* to come frequently and earneſtly *to the Throne of Grace, that we may find help in time of need.* If he be

be *King of all the Earth*, 'tis fit we ſhould be *much* in our *Applications* to him; and that they hold ſome *proportion* to our *Needs* and *Dependencies*.

3. Let us magnify and praiſe this great Governour and King of all the Earth. This is the Uſe the *Pſalmiſt* directs us to: *Sing ye Praiſes.* —— 'Tis great joy to any Country to be under the care of a wiſe and juſt King. Here all the *Earth* may *rejoyce*, for *God is King of all the Earth. The Lord reigneth, let the Earth* Pſ. 97, 1. *rejoyce; and the multitude of the Iſles be glad thereof.*

That we ſhould *praiſe* this great King is moſt juſt and reaſonable: It becomes us to do it: His Divine *Perfections* require it, his *Benefits* to us call for it at our Hands. Here's room for *Praiſe*, and for the *higheſt expreſſions* of it. Here's no fear of *over-doing*, no ſuſpicion of *Flattery*. We may call up all our Powers, employ all our Skill, ſummon in all the help of Art, or Nature, and offer the moſt ſtudied Hymns of Praiſe: and when we have done all, we come ſhort of our Subject. Here's infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, an irreſiſtible Power, an unerring Juſtice, ſpotleſs Holineſs. This King is the Author of our Beings,

Beings, the *Breath of our Noſtrils*, and the length of our Days. We *live* and *breath* in him; what we have, we received *from him*; and the good we *hope* for we expect *by him*. *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.* If any Praiſes can be due to an Earthly Prince; if Wiſdom, or Juſtice, or Deliverances from the greateſt Evils claim it: 'Tis more due to God; who does not more exceed the greateſt Earthly Prince in Power, than he does in Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and Benefactions to Mankind. Let us then *ſtand up* and *call him Bleſſed:* Let us *ſing forth his Praiſes*; and take care

Rom. 11. 36.

To do it *with Underſtanding*, *i. e.* with the beſt of our Power and Skill; with Minds raiſed up toward Heaven; with an Heart inflamed with the love of God, and greatly affected with a ſenſe of his Perfections and Benefits. May our Hearts be always ready for this work of Angels; may we always praiſe him with our Lips and Lives: *Oh that there were ſuch an Heart* in us! That we might on all our Solemnities of this kind glorifie our Creator: That all the Inſtruments of Muſick, and Powers of our Mind might be thus fixed. That we would

would in all our publick Aſſemblies entertain each other with Hymns of Praiſe of the great Creator. *Oh that men would praiſe the Lord for his Goodneſs; and for his wonderful Works to the Children of Men!*

SER-

SERMON III.

Preached at

Guild-Hall Chapel,

April the 17*th.* 1681.

JUDGES I. 7.

....As I have done, ſo God hath requited me....

AFTER the death of *Joſhua*, the Tribe of *Judah*, not without the Direction of God, encounter'd the remaining *Canaanites*, and ſlew of them in *Bezek* ten thouſand men. There they found *Adoni-bezek*, the King or Lord of that place; him they caught, and cut off his Thumbs and great Toes: upon which *Adoni-bezek* ſaid, *Threeſcore and ten Kings, having their Thumbs and great Toes cut off, gathered their Meat under my*

my Table: As I have done, ſo God hath requited me. In which words he does acknowledge the Juſtice of God, in what was inflicted upon him.

I obſerve the *conformity* of the *Puniſhment* to his *Sin*: A thing that might otherwiſe have been ſuppoſed to have happened *Caſually*; but did not befall this Cruel Man without the *particular Providence* of God. And we find him acknowledge no leſs: *As I have done, ſo God hath requited me.*

There is much of the *Providence* of God to be ſeen in the *Puniſhments* which he inflicts upon Evil Men in this Life. For tho' many Sinners proſper, or at leaſt go unpuniſhed, yet God does ſometimes ſend *ſuch* Evils upon ſome Offenders, as do declare that he rules and governs the World.

The World is full of God: *He hath not left himſelf without* ſufficient *Witneſs* of his Being, and his Providence. *He is not far from every one of us.* He is near us; but we ſhut our Eyes, or keep them fixed upon earthly things, and diſcern him not. *He doth great things, paſt finding out: yea, and wonders without number. Lo, he goeth by me, and I ſee him not: he paſſeth on alſo, but I perceive*

Acts 17. 27.

Job 9. 11.

ceive him not. Tho' the Wicked often go unpuniſhed in this Life, yet they ſometimes ſuffer for their Follies here. *Even as I have ſeen, they that plow Iniquity and ſow Wickedneſs reap the ſame.*

Job 4. 8.

And ſo it often comes to paſs; that there is much of God to be ſeen in his *Judgments*, which he inflicts upon *Sinners.* Theſe many times carry the *ſignatures* and *marks* of thoſe *Sins* upon them, for the ſake of *which* they are inflicted: Our puniſhment is often *ſo* contrived, that we may read our *Sin* in our *Suffering.* And then, tho' our trouble might otherwiſe ſeem to be caſual, we are forced to confeſs, that *there is a God that judgeth in the Earth. The Lord is known by the Judgment which he executeth.*

Pſ. 9. 16.

That *Temporal Puniſhments* do ſometimes hold *conformity* with the *Sin*, for which they are ſent, is a certain truth. 'Twas the caſe of *Adoni bezek* here: And ſhall be the Argument of my preſent Diſcourſe. I ſhall

Firſt, Shew you that *ſo it is:* That God hath not only threatned that it ſhall be ſo, but that it hath often ſo fallen out.

Secondly,

Secondly, I ſhall offer ſome *Reaſons* of it.

Thirdly, I ſhall enquire *what Sins* eſpecially are thus puniſhed.

Fourthly, I ſhall conſider what *Application* we ought to make of it.

I. I ſhall ſhew that thus it is: God hath threatned it ſhall be ſo; and it hath very often come to paſs.

That God hath threatned it ſhall be ſo we ſhall ſoon find: Our Saviour aſſures us, that *with what meaſure we mete, it ſhall be meaſured to us again.* Which words are a *Proverb* among the *Jews*, than which there is hardly any thing more common among their Writers. *Autorem ſcelus repetit.* Our miſchief recoils upon us: and God hath given us warning that it ſhall be ſo. *He ſhall have Judgment without Mercy that ſhewed no Mercy.* God threatens thoſe who ſold his People to the *Grecians*; and lets them know, that their Sons and Daughters ſhall therefore be ſold to the *Sabeans.* And againſt *Edom* God denounceth, *As thou haſt done, it ſhall be done unto thee; thy Reward ſhall return upon thine own Head: For as ye have drunk upon my holy Mountain, ſo ſhall all the*

Matt. 7. 2.

Jam. 2. 13.

Joel 3. 6, 7, 8.

Obadiah v. 15, 16.

Heathen drink continually; yea, they ſhall drink and they ſhall ſwallow down.

Iſai. 23. 1. Again, *Wo to thee that ſpoileſt and was not ſpoiled; and dealeſt treacherouſly, and they dealt not treacherouſly with thee: When thou ſhalt ceaſe to ſpoil thou ſhalt be ſpoiled; and when thou ſhalt make an end to deal treacherouſly, they ſhall deal treacherouſly with thee.*

That thus it hath fallen out I ſhall now ſhew you; and it will be no hard thing to do it. But then it is to be conſidered, that this *conformity* between the *Sin* and the *Puniſhment* of it, is not always *alike*, and of the *ſame* kind: You may take the Account of it in the following *Particulars.*

1. Sometime the Sinner ſuffers in the very *ſame Inſtance* in which he ſinned. *Adoni-bezek* is an eminent inſtance to this purpoſe; he had cut off the Thumbs and great Toes of Seventy Kings; and as he *did*, ſo he *ſuffered.* They that

Rev. 16. 5, 6. *ſhed the Blood of Saints*, have *Blood given them to drink.* The *Egyptians drowned* all the *Males* of *Iſrael*; and were themſelves plagued with the Death of their *Firſt-born*; and afterwards overwhelmed with the Waters of the *Red-Sea.* And as the *Perſecution* in *Egypt* fell

fell *moſt* upon the *Males*, ſo 'tis obſerv'd, that the *Plagues* fell *leaſt* upon the *Women*. The Author of the *Book* of *Wiſdom* obſerves from what befel the *Egyptians*, that God would have Men know, that *wherewithall a man ſinneth, by the ſame alſo he ſhall be puniſhed.* The *Egytians ſuffered* thoſe Evils which they had wrongfully *inflicted*. And *Jethro* ſeems to intimate no leſs, when he ſays, *Now I know that the Lord is greater than all Gods: For in the thing wherein they dealt proudly*, he was *above them*. *David's Adultery* was puniſhed with the *Violation* of his *own Bed*. And no wonder that *Jehojakim* ſhould be threatned with the burial of an Aſs, when he ſlew *Uriah*, and caſt his dead Body into the Graves of the common People. *Samuel* tells *Agag*, *As thy Sword hath made Women childleſs, ſo ſhall thy Mother be childleſs among Women*: No wonder that the *Edomites Heritage* is laid waſte, when we conſider the Language of the Children of *Edom* in the day of *Jeruſalem*, who ſaid, *Raſe it, raſe it, even to the Foundations thereof.* Many Examples we have in Ancient and Modern Story, of thoſe who have *ſuffered* in the very *ſame* kind, in which they have *ſinned*:

Wiſd. 11. 16.

Exod. 18. 11. & R. Sol. Jarchi in loc.

2 Sam. 11. 4. with ch. 16. 22. Jer. 26. 23. with ch. 22. 19.

1 Sam. 15. 33.

Mal. 1. 3. with Pſ. 137. 7.

Procuſtes was ſtretched to death by *Theſeus* (as *Plutarch* tells us) upon his Bed; and that was the kind of death he had been wont to inflict upon others. And that Author tells us of ſeveral others who were put to death after the very *ſame* manner in which they had ſlain others. *Henry the Second*, the *French King*, began his Reign with the Entertainment of a *bloody Duel*; and he himſelf was killed at a *Tournament*.

Plutarch. Theſ.

2. Sometimes the Sinner's *Suffering* is ſo very *like* his *Sin* that he cannot but diſcern the Finger of God. Thus ſometimes the *unmerciſull* man is *unpitied* in his Calamity: The *Proud* falls into *Contempt*; the *Rebellious* is *diſobey'd* by his *Inferiours*; the *Slanderer* is *falſely accuſed*. *Jacob's Sons* were *unmerciſull* to their Brother *Joſeph*; and when they wanted *Mercy*, they could ſay, *We are verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his Soul, when he beſought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us.* *The haughty Nebuchadnezzar* is turned to *graze among the Beaſts of the Field.* And *Herod*, for his *Pride*, is eaten up of *Worms*. *Uzzah*, for his *Arrogance*, is ſtruck with the *Leaproſie*: *Joaſh* that *killed*

Gen. 42. 21.

Acts 12.

2 Chron. 26.

killed the *H. Prieſt*, is *ſlain* by his *Ser-* ch. 24.
vants; *Jehoram*, that wanted *Compaſſi-* ch. 21.
on, and unmercifully *killed* his Brethren, is *ſmitten* in his *Bowels*; εἰς τί πὰ σπλάγχνα τοὺς μὴ σπλαγχνιζομένους; *God threatens the* Iſraelites, *like as ye have forſa-* Jer. 5. 19.
ken me, and ſerved ſtrange Gods in your Land, ſo ſhall ye ſerve Strangers in a Land that is not yours. The *beheading* of *John Baptiſt* was contrived by *Herodias*, and procured by her Daughter: Our Books tell us, that this Daughter of hers going over an Ice, ſlipped in and hung by her *Head* with her Body in the Water, till it was ſevered by the Ice.

3. Sometime this *agreeableneſs* between the *Sin* and the *Puniſhment* may be ſeen in the *ſubject matter* of the *Sin* compared with the Puniſhment. *Nadab* and *Abihu* ſinned in offering *ſtrange Fire*; and by a *Fire* they periſhed alſo. *Eli* ſinned in not *reſtraining* his *Sons*; and is ſeverely puniſhed in *them* too. *David* ſinned greatly in *numbring* the *People*, and was by God's *leſſening* the *number* puniſhed: *Saul*, that ſpared *Amalek*, died by the hands of an *Amalekite*; They that *truſted* to *Egypt* were *afflicted* by the *Egyptians*. Thoſe things we truſt in, and are the moſt fond of, do often deceive

and punish us. What we dote upon, does often prove a Plague to us. The *Child* whom we too *fondly* loved and indulged is *taken from* us, or *lives* to *torment* us: And our *Inferiours* whom we have not faithfully *reproved* and *instructed*, do very often prove a great *Cross* to us; and by our *Suffering* we may discern our *Sin*. The *worldly* thing which we *inordinately* desire and pray for, very often proves our *Ruine*.

——— *Multis*
Et sua mortifera est eloquentia.

The Woman that passionately said, *Give me Children, or else I die*, died in *Childbearing*: There have been many that irregularly prayed for Children, or Riches, &c. who have been scourged by being heard:

Evertêre domos totas, optantibus ipsis,
Dî faciles———

4. This Agreement and Correspondence between the Sin and Punishment is sometimes to be discerned in the *Circumstances* of *Time* and *Place*.

First,

First, Of *Time*: So it is that the very *Time* of our *Suffering* may ſometime put us in mind of our *Sin*. *Jeruſalem* was *beſieged* by the *Romans* about *that time* of the Year when the *Jews* put our *Saviour* to death. The *Spies* were *forty days* in ſearching out the Land of *Canaan*; and ſo many *Years* were the *Iſraelites*, for their evil Report, and their Sins, ſentenced to the Labours of the *Wilderneſs*. The *Temple* is obſerved by the *Jews* (not to ſay by the *Chriſtians* alſo) to be twice deſtroyed upon the *ſame* day; and *that* alſo upon the *ſame* day of the Month upon which *Moſes*, for their *Idolatry*, brake the *Tables* of the *Law*. And 'tis obſerved, that the great *Calamity* which befell the *Jews* from *Caius* under *Petronius*, light upon them at that time of the Year when they put our *Lord* to death. *Then* it was (*viz.* at the Feaſt of Unleavened-bread) that they were affrighted with the *prodigious* tokens of their Deſtruction. *Then* it was (ſays *Joſephus*) that in the ninth Hour of the Night, it was for half an Hour together as light about the *Altar* and *Temple* as if it had been clear Day. Then it was that a Bullock that was about to be ſacrificed brought

Numb. 13. 25. with 14. 33.

V. Ja. Armachan. Annal. p. 11. *Ad annum Chriſti* 70.

Joſeph. de Bell. Jud. l. 7. c. 31.

forth a Lamb, ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ μέσῳ. And the *Eaſtern Gate* of the *Temple*, which required twenty Men to ſhut it, and was faſtned with ſtrong Bars, at Midnight opened of its own accord.

Secondly, *Place*. Thus it ſometimes happens that we ſuffer *where* we have ſinned. Thus the Prophet tells *Ahab*, 1 King. 21. 19. *Thus ſaith the Lord, in the place where the Dogs licked the Blood of* Naboth, *ſhall Dogs lick thy Blood, even thine.* Thus, 2 King. 23. 16. according to a Prediction, were *Bones burnt* upon *that Altar* where *Sin* had been committed. And it is very well known, that the *City where* our *Lord* was ſentenced to *death*, was the place where the miſerable *Jews ſuffered* almoſt unſpeakable Evils. *Our Story* tells us, that the *Norman Conquerour's Son* was killed by an Arrow in that *place* which his *Father* had *unpeopled*; and pull'd down *Churches*, and other *Religious* Houſes, to turn it into a Foreſt. *Valerius Maximus* tells us, that *Tertullius* was ſlain in that *conſecrated Wood* which he had begun to cut down for Shipping. *Val. Max.* l. 1. c. 1. *Mountaig. Eſſays*, p. 50. And we read of a Father, who being dragged about the Streets by his Son; he bid his Son ſtop at a certain Door; that being the very place unto which he had

had formerly dragged his Father. We read in the *Prophet*, that the *Image* of *Jealouſie* was *Northward*, at the Gate of the Altar; and that it was toward the *North* that the Women ſate weeping for *Tammuz*: And as their Iniquity abounded in the *North* part of the City, ſo the Judgments of God entred the ſame way: The Executioners of God's Wrath came from the *higher Gate which lieth toward the North*. The place where our Lord ſuffered was at the North-ſide of the City; and as that ſide of the City was moſt *Sinfull*, ſo it was the *weakeſt* ſide; and it is worth our obſerving, that *Antiochus*, and *Pompey*, and *Herod*, and *Titus* did all beſiege it on that ſide. And *Joſephus* does very frequently mention the many Evils which happened to the *Jews* from *that quarter* of the City.

Ezek. 8. 5, 14.

Ezek. 9. 2.

Joſeph. Antiq. l. 14. c. 8. & c. 27. *De Bell. Judaic.* l. 1. c. 5. & 13. l. 6. c. 3, 7, 8.

Having thus ſhewed, that ſo it is, that there is a very great conformity and likeneſs between the Sin and the Puniſhment; I ſhall ſhew you,

II. The Reaſons of it: For, if what hath been ſaid be duely conſidered, it cannot be thought that theſe things come to paſs by *chance*. And tho' I will not attempt to give an account of all God's

God's proceedings in his Judgments upon Mankind, nor make any particular or invidious Reflections, yet I shall humbly offer the following *Reasons*, why God does many times punish Men after this manner.

1. God may be presumed to do thus for the Honour of his own Name, and to assert his Providence over this lower World. Wicked Men are very prone to deny the *Being* or *Providence* of God, because they go unpunished. Because God does not *strike*, they deny him to *be*, or to be *concerned* in Humane Affairs.

Rom. 2. 4. 2 Pet. 3. 9. It is true, this Lenity and *Forbearance* of God is a very powerfull motive to *Repentance*, where it is duely considered.

Eccl. 8 11. Ps. 50. 21. —73. 5, 6. But evil Men are so far from making that good use of it, that they do thence *encourage* themselves in their Wickedness, and contempt of God and Religion. We read of *Dionysius*, that when he had robb'd a Temple, and after that had sailed prosperously, he laughed among his Friends, and fleer'd at the Gods, for sending him a prosperous Navigation after his Sacrilege: And that he pulled off from *Jupiter* a *golden* Coat and put him on a *Woollen* one with this Jear, That that of *Gold* was too *heavy* in *Summer*,

mer, and in the *Winter* too *cold*. He robbed *Æſculapius* of his *Beard* of *Gold*; ſaying, That it did not *become him* to have any, when his *Father Apollo* had none at all. Such pranks he did, and ſcoffed at the Deities whom he robbed. I wiſh we had no greater or nearer Examples of Sacrilege and Impiety: We ſhall not need go ſo far back as to *Dionyſius* for a Scoffer at a Deity. We have thoſe among us which deny the *Being*, or the *Providence* of *God*, and ſcoff at every Thing and Perſon that is ſeparated and holy. And (which is a ſad conſideration) theſe bold Sinners are not puniſhed by their Superiours for their open Wickedneſs: And the *Heathens* ſhewed a greater concern for their *Falſe Gods*, than *we* have done for the *True*. The *Athenians* baniſhed *Protagoras* for queſtioning, whether there were Gods or not; and they gave a Reward to him that killed *Diagoras*, for his contempt of the holy Myſteries of *Ceres*. But we have forborn thoſe Men that have bid defiance to Heaven, and openly contemned the God that made Heaven and Earth, and the holy Religion of the Bleſſed *Jeſus*. 'Tis no wonder, then, that God ſhould ſometimes puniſh theſe bold Sinners

Liban. Sophiſt. Apol. Socrat.

Sinners in ſuch a manner, as ſerves to vindicate his Being and his Providence; eſpecially where the Magiſtrates have neglected their Duty. He takes away ſome of thoſe wicked men *as with a Whirlwind, ſo that a man ſhall ſay, verily there is a Reward for the Righteous, verily there is a God that judgeth in the Earth.*

Levit. 20. 2, 3, 4, 5.

Pſ. 58. 11.

2. God may be preſumed to do this for the awakening the Sinner to a ſenſe of his Sin, and to bring him to Repentance. God lays Trains for the bringing back the wretched Sinners; he ſends them many Mercies to this end, and where his *Goodneſs* is *conſidered*, it *leads to Repentance*. But thoſe that are not *melted* by his *Kindneſs* are ſometime by theſe *Judgments overcome*, and *forced* to *acknowledge*, that *God is Righteous*, and that *they have done very wickedly*. God does as wiſe *Phyſicians* do, who make uſe of *Corroſives*, where *gentle* Remedies prove ineffectual. *Affliction* is our faithfull Friend, and is ſo wiſely contrived by God, that it tells us not only our fault in *general*, but our particular ſin alſo. Many have by this method been brought to the knowledge of *God* and of *themſelves*. The *ſenſe* that we have done

done amiſs, and that God takes notice of our Sins, have a great tendence toward our *amendment*. And happy is that Sinner whom God *corrects* and *inſtructs* at once.

3. For the warning of others, that they might take warning by the Sufferings of other men. For this cauſe theſe Judgments are inflicted, and for this they are recorded in the *Holy Writ*. The Plagues that have befallen the *Proud*, the *Profane*, and *Malicious*, teach us *Humility*, *Piety*, and *Charity*. *We* are to beware of thoſe Rocks and Shelves upon which *others* have been Shipwrack'd. We are obliged to conſider the Works of God: And this is one of the great Advantages of the *Hiſtory* of ancient Times, that from what Evils have *fallen* upon *other* men *we* may learn what to *avoid*.

III. I ſhall now enquire what ſins are thus puniſhed in this preſent life. This, I confeſs, is a matter of ſome difficulty; however I ſhall confine my Diſcourſe to thoſe only that we have upon Record the moſt frequent Examples of. Under this Head I reckon

1. *Un-*

1. *Unmercifulneſs* and *Cruelty*. He that *ſhews no* Mercy often lives to *need* it. He that wanted Bowels does many times fall unpitied. I have given you *ſome* Inſtances to this purpoſe already; and your obſervation of paſt and preſent Times will eaſily furniſh you with many *more*.

He that rejoyceth at his *Brother's* Calamity does but beſpeak his *own*. *Chaldea ſhall be a ſpoil; all that ſpoil her ſhall be ſatisfied, ſaith the Lord: Becauſe ye were glad, becauſe ye rejoyced, O ye deſtroyers of mine Heritage.* We find God declares himſelf in this matter; and therefore we may the more ſafely conclude, By Cruelty to our *Brother*, we do but *treaſure up Wrath* againſt *our ſelves*. And perhaps nothing happens more commonly than this, that the *Unmercifull* fall into the Hands of *ſuch*.

Jer. 50. 10, 11. Micah 7. 8, 10. Ezek. 36. 2. Prov. 24. 11, 12.

Under this Head I reckon *Murder*. 'Tis rarely known that the Murderer ſcapes: And if he chance to avoid the *Magiſtrates Sword*, yet the *Hand of Heaven* cuts him off, that he does *not live out half his days*. If he commit the Sin in ſecret, yet does God, by a ſtrange Providence, find him out. Tyrants and Murderers ſeldom die a *dry death*; they that

that *ſhed Blood* have *Blood* given them to *drink:* The Divine *Vengeance does not ſuffer* ſuch men to *live.* We read of *Antiochus*, that he was ſmote with an incurable and viſible Plague, and that was a remedileſs Diſeaſe, in the Bowels, and ſore torments in the inward parts: And 'tis well obſerved to fall upon him, πάνυ δικαίως, moſt juſtly; for he had tormented other men's Bowels with many and ſtrange Torments. And *Euſebius* tells us, that *Maximinus* his *Eyes* dropt out of his Head before he died; and adds, that he did but endure therein *that* Puniſhment *himſelf* which he had formerly deviſed againſt the *Chriſtians*; and *that* δικαστῆ ψήφῳ, by the juſt and righteous Judgment of God. Acts 28. 4. 2 Maccab. 9. 5, 6. *Euſeb. in Vit. Conſtantin.*

2. Deviſing *Miſchief* againſt others. He that deſigns his *Neighbour's* Ruine, lays a Plot for his *own. Haman*, that erected a *Gallows* for *Mordecai* is *hanged* on it *himſelf. He made a Pit and digged it; and is fallen into the Ditch which he made.* Again, *The Heathen are ſunk down into the Pit that they made; in the Net which they hid, is their own Foot taken.* And then it follows, *The Lord is known by the Judgment which he executeth, the Wicked is ſnared in the Work* of Pſ. 7. 15. Pſ. 9. 15. v. 16. 57. 6.

of his own Hands. The Wiſe Man goes farther, *Whoſo diggeth a Pit ſhall fall therein, and he that rolleth a Stone it ſhall return upon him. And whoſo cauſeth the Righteous to go aſtray in an evil way, he ſhall fall himſelf in his own Pit.*

Prov. 26. 27. ch. 28. 10. Eccl. 10. 8.

This hath often happened by the righteous Judgment of God. The *Jews*, in their worldly Wiſdom, thought it beſt to *kill* our *Saviour* for fear of the *Romans*; whereas their *Murder* of *him* was the *true cauſe* that *brought* the *Romans* upon them. *Saul* purſued *David*; and ſundry times fell into the Hands of him, whom he perſecuted. Men are often caught by their own Craft, and intangled by their own Devices: And many that have projected their *Brother's* Ruine have but procured their *own*. We have a Story to this purpoſe of *Pope Alexander the Sixth*, that *he* unawares drank of the *poiſoned* Cup which he had prepared for *others*.

3. Open *defiance* of *God*. There have been ſuch men in the World that have bid open defiance to God: That have deny d his Being and his Providence, his Power and his Care; that have derided him, and openly blaſphemed. I wiſh I could only ſay that there *have* been ſuch

ſuch men. It is not to be wondred that *ſuch men* ſhould ſuffer in *ſuch a manner*, as might give the World *warning* of their Sin. A great example to this purpoſe was *Sennacherib*. 'Tis well known how his Servant *Rabſhakeh defied the God of Iſrael* and magnified his *Maſter*'s Power: But God ſoon *leſſened* the *Army* of his *Maſter*; an Angel ſlaying in one Night 185000. And for *Sennacherib*, whoſe Servant had derided the *God of Iſrael*, he was ſmitten even *then* when he was worſhipping his *own God Niſroch*, when he might moſt of all have expected the protection of his God. The *Philiſtins* ſmarted ſeverely when they had taken the *Ark*, (the Symbol of the Divine Preſence) and their *Dagon* fell down before it. And the men of *Beth-ſhemeſh* and *Uzzah* ſuffered greatly for uſing it irreverently and amiſs. We know what great trouble *Caius* gave the *Jews*, by attempting to ſet up his Image in their Temple; and in his Succeſſor's time their Money which bore his Image, was melted down, and his Statues were removed. Our Books tell us of ſundry men, that have been ſo arrogant as to attempt the imitating of Thunder and Lightning, that have been deſtroyed

2 King. 19.

themſelves by the one and the other.

I may, to what I have named already, add ſome other Sins, which are very frequently puniſhed after this manner: For the truth of which I referr you to your Obſervation and common Experience: And tho' I do not produce Scripture Examples, yet we may obſerve many Examples from undoubted Records of paſt Times, *viz.*

4. Hypocriſie and counterfeiting what we are not. *e. g.* When we pretend Poverty, Sickneſs, Diſtraction, Delirancy, a ſtammering Speech, *&c.* When all things are well with us, it is juſt we ſhould be what we profeſs our ſelves to be. I find among the *Jewiſh* Writers a Saying to this purpoſe, *That, whoſoever feigned himſelf to be Blind, or Lame, &c. he does not go out of the World, till he be really that which he counterfeited before.* It is very certain that this hath frequently happened, not without the juſt Judgment of God.

Buxtorf Lexic. Rabbin in סמא

We have to this purpoſe a very remarkable Story in our Books. It is reported of *Epiphanius*, that he ſpent his whole Eſtate in Works of Piety and Charity. But it was with him as it hath been with others of a vaſt Charity, he

was

was impoſed upon. Two Beggars meeting this good Biſhop, that well knew his Kindneſs, combined to put a trick upon him, that they might draw from him the greater Alms: One of them lies along upon the Ground, and feigns himſelf dead; the other ſtanding by, bewails the Death of his Friend, as alſo his own Poverty, which rendred him unable to give him a decent Burial. The good Biſhop comforts him, gives him what was ſufficient for the Interment, and goes his way: Upon this he calls upon his Companion, to riſe and partake of *that* which they had gotten by their Craft. But ſo it was (and it was *juſtly* ſo) that he who *feigned* himſelf dead, was *really* ſo.

Thoſe that have *pretended Poverty*, have juſtly been *rendred poor*; and thoſe that have *pleaded* it in *excuſe* from a *Work of Charity* have been rendred *unable*, as they were before *unwilling* to *give*. The *Chriſtians* at *Conſtantinople* pretended Poverty, when they ſhould have contributed to their common Defence; but they were quickly, by the *Infidels*, *rendred* what they were but in *pretence* before. We have refuſed to ſet our Hand to a pious or charitable Work,

upon the pretence of our Poverty; and God hath ſent a Fire or a Shipwrack, or ſuffered ſome falſe People to rob us of our unſanctify'd Wealth, and to bring us to real Poverty. We read of one *Cælius*, that to excuſe himſelf from ſome attendance, feigned himſelf ill of the Gout. He cauſed his Legs to be anointed and ſwathed, and put on the Countenance and Carriage of a Gouty Man: And in the end, he that *pretended* it, was *really* ſo.

Tantum cura poteſt & ars doloris,
Deſiit fingere Cælius podagram.

I might tell you of another, that loſt the ſight of that Eye which he counterfeited blind before. God does ſometimes take men at their words, and *make* them *that* very thing which they did but *pretend* before. God is not to be mocked; and it is high ingratitude to deny the Mercies of God to us.

5. *Rebellion* againſt *Parents*: This is a very hainous Offence; a ſmaller *Treaſon* it is, and that which is often puniſhed in this Life, even in the kind. It is frequently ſo, that a Rebellious Child is puniſhed by the Rebellion of his own Children

Children and Inferiours. It were not hard to give you many remarkable Examples to this purpoſe, if there were any need of it.

6. *Slander* and *Falſe accuſing*. The *Falſe-witneſs* was, by the Law of *Moſes*, to endure the *very Evil* which he would have brought upon his Brother. And perhaps there is no Sin more conſtantly puniſhed in the ſame kind, than this of Slander, Detraction, and Falſe-accuſing. He that reproacheth another, is generally evil ſpoken of himſelf: Men commonly are not upon the ſcore in this matter. A little Obſervation will aſſure us of the truth of the matter of fact: And methinks the words of *Solomon* imply no leſs, *Take no heed* (ſays he) *to all words that ſhall be ſpoken, leſt thou hear thy Servant curſe thee. For oftentimes alſo thine own Heart knoweth, that thou thy ſelf likewiſe haſt curſed others.* Eccl. 7. 21, 22.

Before I proceed to the *Application*, I muſt add this Caution, That when *God* ſends *his Judgments*, it will become us to *judge our ſelves*, and not *our Neighbour*. We are too prone to *judge other* Men from what *they ſuffer*: but it becomes us to be very *ſparing* and *cautelous*

in this matter. The *Barbarians* were too raſh in *judging St.* Paul *a Murderer*, when they ſaw the *Viper* on him. Our Religion forbids us to *judge other* men; we are ſafe when we *judge our ſelves*. The *Works* of God are like his *Word*, in which there are ſome things *hard to be underſtood*; and we ſhall run into great danger if we undertake to be the Interpreters of theſe Difficulties. We had need live much at home; and if we do, we ſhall find enough to accuſe our ſelves of, without judging our Brother.

Act. 28. 4. Luk. 13. John 9. 2.

IV. I ſhall proceed now to make ſome Application of what hath been ſaid.

1. Here we have a good Argument of the *Being* and *Providence* of God. Wicked men are encouraged by their Impunity, and are prone to ſay, *How doth God know?* But when the Divine Judgment reacheth the hardieſt and proudeſt of them, when it lights upon the boldeſt Sinner, and when his *Puniſhment* hath the *marks* and *ſignatures* of his *Sin* upon it, then he is convinced that *there is a God that judgeth in the Earth*. Did *all* Sinners ſuffer thus, we ſhould doubt of a *future Judgment*; and did *none*, we ſhould doubt of a *Providence*

dence of God at preſent. *God* does *not leave* the lower *World without Witneſs* of his Care and Providence; in that he does not only *puniſh*, but ſo *puniſh*, that the Sufferer may *ſee* his Sin, and God's Diſpleaſure againſt it.

2. We may learn what cauſe we have to bleſs God for his Inflictions. They are generally ſo many Leſſons and Inſtructions. We are, or we may be, inlightned by them, if we will duly conſider the operation of his Hands. Proſperity it is that caſts a Miſt before our Eyes: When we fall into trouble, and ſtand within the proſpect of Eternity, then (if not before) we begin to be wiſe. Then our Vizors and Diſguiſes fall off, and we begin to know our ſelves. In our Proſperity we ſin without controul; and becauſe God does not *ſtrike*, we think he does not *ſee*; or that he Pſ. 50. 21. does *approve* of our ways. When we make our Accounts up, we ſhall find, that we have great cauſe to bleſs God for our Afflictions.

3. Let us read over our Afflictions, and ſpell out the meaning of them: We are too apt to do this for other men, let us do it for our ſelves. Let us do well at home, and read ſevere Lectures to *our*

ſelves; but by no means judge or condemn *our Brother*.

Do we meet with cruel and unmerciful Men, that uſe us with Rigour and Severity? Let us conſider: Have *we* ſhewn Mercy to others, when it was in the power of our Hand to do it? Have *we* not been deaf to the Cries of the Poor, and the juſt Complaints of the Oppreſſed? Are *our Children* undutifull and rebellious? Have *we* not been wanting in our Duty to *our Parents* and *Superiours*? or is it not owing in great meaſure to our neglect of their Education? Are our *Servants* intractable? Have *we* not been diſobedient to our *Civil* or *Spiritual* Governours?

Have we Enemies without a cauſe? are we reproached and ſlandered? Have *we* not been too prone to ſpeak Evil of others, and to reproach our Neighbours that have done us no harm?

Do we meet with Poverty and Contempt? Let us now conſider our Ways. Have we uſed our Riches well? Have we not been puffed up with our Wealth? Did we ſerve God diligently in the midſt of our Abundance? and have we not contemned our poor Brother?

We loſe our Children! But did we not

not love our Children more than God? Our Friend deceives us! But did we not place too great a Confidence in him? We fall into real Want: but did we not complain without a cauſe? We are uneaſie under our Afflictions; but were we not unthankfull for our Mercies? We are diſappointed of our Hopes; but that we had not been, if our *Hope and Truſt had been in God?*

In a word, may we not read our own *Unmercifulneſs* in our Brother's *Cruelty?* May we not diſcern our *Pride* and *Luxury*, in our *Poverty* and *Contempt?* May we not perceive *our own Ungovernableneſs* in the *Rebellion* of *our Children* and *Servants?*

4. Let us learn to prevent our Sorrows, by amendment of Life. This is the ſureſt courſe we can take. *Be not overmuch Wicked, neither be thou Fooliſh; why ſhouldeſt thou die before thy time?* If we do amiſs, we ſhall be ſure to hear of it again; and 'twill be well for us that we ſuffer *here* only. But I muſt tell you, that thoſe Afflictions which are the Off-ſpring of our Guilt, will be the moſt ſharp and poinant: We ſhall have a *double* load upon us, our *Sorrow* and our *Guilt* together. But let me ſpeak more particularly: As

Eccl. 7. 17.

As you would not *fall into unmercifull Hands* be ſure to *ſhew Mercy: Forgive* as readily as *ye would be forgiven.* As ye would receive no wrong, be ſure that ye *do* none. As ye would *avoid* being *reproached*, *ſpeak Evil* of *no* man. *Dig no Pit* for your *Neighbour*, as ye would *not fall into it your ſelves:* And do *not throw* a *Stone* at another, which ye would *not have fall* on your *own Head.*

Lift not up your ſelves againſt God, as ye would *not* be *caſt down*; and do not *deny* God's Mercies to you, as ye would not be *deprived* of them.

Let *Children obey* their *Parents*, as they would *avoid* the *Curſe* of a *Rebellious Off-ſpring.* And let all *Servants* be *true* and *juſt* to their *Maſters*, as *they* would be *ſincerely dealt with* by *others.*

Let us conſider, in the fear of God, that our Iniquity will, ſooner or later, find us out. God judges the World; and no Iniquity ſhall be long unpuniſhed. If we *ſhew* no Mercy, let us never think to *receive* any: We ſhall inherit the Fruit of our own Ways.

Our *Saviour* tells us, that *thoſe who confeſs him before men, he will own before his Father:* And *deny them that deny him*,

So

So that we ſhall be ſure *hereafter*, at fartheſt, to be dealt with as we demean our ſelves *here*. And tho' we ſhould eſcape a Puniſhment *here*, we ſhall not eſcape that which is *to come*. We do not know *how ſoon* we may be tryed; and it will be great Wiſdom to diſpoſe our ſelves for all events of Things. Let us then *dare to be good*; and *whatſoever* we ſuffer, let us *cleave to the Truth*: There is a *Righteous God* who *obſerves our doings*, and will, ſooner, or later, *render to every Man according to his Works*.

SER-

SERMON IV.

1 PET. V. 7.

Caſting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

IN theſe words we have recommended to us, a *Duty*, viz. *Caſting all our care upon God:* and a very great *Incouragement* to the performance of it: *For he careth for you.* The *Duty* it ſelf is for our Eaſe and Advantage; and the *Motive* is alſo unexceptionable. The words will afford us theſe two Propoſitions:

Firſt, That it is our *Duty* to caſt all our Care upon God; *Caſting all* ——

Secondly, That God taketh a particular care of us. *For he* — ——

Firſt, That it is our Duty to caſt all our Care upon God: *Caſting* — —

'Tis

'Tis μέριμνα, the word ſignifies ſolicitude or inquietude of Mind; the anxiety of our Thoughts, that renders our Life uneaſie and reſtleſs: This is the great *burden of Life*, the *labour and heat of* our *Day*: *Caſt thy burden upon the Lord.* This is *the evil of the Day.* Pſ. 55. 23. Matth. 6. 34.

But then 'tis πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν, all your Care. Our Cares are many, very various, and very great: *For what we ſhall eat, and drink, and put on.* We are full of Care for *our ſelves*, and for our *Children*; for our Friends and Relations; for Futurities, and the events of things. We *feel* ſome Evils, and ſome we *fear*: We want *Counſel*, or we want *Courage* and *Strength*: We are in *doubt* what courſe to take; and this renders us full of *Care*: We are in pain and uneaſie, upon very many accounts. We cannot ſee how we ſhall ſupport, under the Troubles that are approaching us. In a word, ſo it is, that we many times know not what to doe; ſo great is our Miſery that is upon us.

The Apoſtle does not bid us ſtand quietly *under* our Load; this might not be poſſible: Our ſtrength is not great enough to bear it: It would bear us down. He bids us caſt it away: There's no eaſe in

in *retaining* our Cares, no end in *poring* upon them: 'Tis our beſt courſe to *throw* them *off*.

All our Care muſt be to place them where they will not be uneaſie, and ſo to diſpoſe of them, that they do not return upon us again. There's a Saying among the *Jewiſh Writers*, that if a man would hang his weight upon a *Tree*, he muſt take care to chooſe one *ſtrong* enough to bear his weight; elſe he will be ſure to fall. Our Burdens are *weighty*; and the *Apoſtle* tells us upon *whom* we muſt caſt them: *Caſting all your care upon him.*

It may ſeem ſomething ſtrange, that our Religion ſhould *diſcharge us* from all *care*: And yet ſo it is; *Be carefull for nothing. Take no thought for your life. Take no thought for to morrow.* And ſeek not ye *what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink, neither be ye of doubtfull Mind. Labour not for the Meat which periſheth. Lay not up for your ſelves Treaſures upon Earth.* Theſe Expreſſions rife high; and ſome may think it therefore unlawfull to labour and uſe a provident Care; they may perhaps think it needleſs to follow their Callings. And therefore for the better ſpeaking to this *Propoſition*, I ſhall *Firſt*,

Phil. 4. 6.
Matt. 6. 25. v. 34.
Luke 12. 29.
Joh. 6. 27.
Matt. 6. 16.

First, Shew how it is to be *underſtood.*

Secondly, The *Grounds* of it.

Thirdly, The *Uſe* that it will afford us.

I. I ſhall ſhew you how this *Propoſition* is to be *underſtood*: Where I may have ſome occaſion to reflect upon ſome of thoſe *Scriptures* above-named. And *that* you may take in the following *Severals.*

1. It muſt not be ſo underſtood as to excuſe us from *Labour* and *Diligence* in our *Callings*: We are not obliged to ſhut up our Shops, and give over our Merchandiſe and Traffick, our Plowing and our Husbandry; and to expect God's Care will ſuperſede the need of our Diligence. *Let every man abide in the ſame Calling wherein he was called.* 1 Cor. 7. 20. Again, *For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat.* 2 Theſ. 3. 10. Our Religion commends to us the providing for our *Families*, and Mercy to the *Poor*; and gives us to underſtand, that 'tis a *more bleſſed* thing *to give than to receive. Let him that ſtole ſteal no more; but rather* Epheſ. 4. 28.

ther let him labour, working with his Hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Our Religion does not allow us in an *idle Life*; nor does it by any means commend to us that of *idle Monks* and *Mendicants*. It commends to us *Labour* and *Diligence* in our Calling, as well as *Devotion* and *Fervour* in the Service of God. It would have us be *not ſlothfull in Buſineſs*; as well as *fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord.* We are not diſcharged from the *Labour* of our *Hands*, and the *Sweat* of our *Brows*; but only from the *Anxiety* of our *Hearts*. We are not to *leave* our Callings, but to be *diligent in* them: *Servants* muſt *obey* their *Maſters* with all Fidelity and Diligence; and every *other* man muſt labour in the place in which God has ſet him. We muſt attend every one to our Province.

Rom. 12. 11.

Rom. 12. 7. *Whether Miniſtry, let us wait on our Miniſtring; or he that teacheth on teaching; or he that exhorteth on exhortation: He that giveth, let him do it with Simplicity; he that ruleth with Diligence.* Our Religion is a moſt *merciſull* Inſtitution; but yet it rejects even thoſe *Widows* that are *idle*, that *wander about from Houſe to Houſe.*

1 Tim. 5. 11, 13.

'Tis

'Tis true indeed, 'tis ſaid, *Labour not for the Meat that periſheth.* But *this*, however it condemn *anxiety* of Mind, does not forbid our *Diligence.* Joh. 6. 27.

Beſides, in that place, our *Labour* for *the Meat that periſheth*, is not forbid but *as* it *exceeds* the *Care* of *our Souls*: Nor is the *one condemned*, but the *other* Care (*viz.* of our *immortal Food*) is *preferred* before it. It is very uſual in the *H. Scriptures*, that a *Comparative* is expreſſed after the manner of an *Antitheſis*: *Inſtances* there are very many to this purpoſe. *Rend your Hearts and not your Garments*; i. e. *rather than* your Garments. *Receive my Inſtruction and not Silver, and Knowledge rather than fine Gold. I deſired Mercy and not Sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than Burnt-offerings. Thou deſireſt not Sacrifice.* That is, God preferred a contrite Spirit before them. In this caſe, *that* ſeems to be *denied* and *forbid*, which is *placed behind ſomething elſe.* Thus are theſe words to be underſtood; *Labour not for the Meat that periſheth, but for that Meat which endureth unto everlaſting life; which the Son of Man ſhall give unto you.* That is, *rather* labour for the *one* than the *other.* *Seek not ye what ye ſhall* Joel 2. 12. Prov. 8. 10. Hoſe. 6. 6. Pſ. 51. 16. Joh. 5. 27. Luke 12. 29.

ſhall eat, &c. So our Saviour ſays in
Mat. 6. 33. *one* place; but then in *another*, *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs*, &c. And this may ſerve alſo for an Anſwer to *Matth.* 6. 19, 20.

2. It muſt not be ſo underſtood as prohibiting all manner of provident Care, and Forecaſt for a future Subſiſtance. We may lawfully lay by ſomething for Old-age, or Sickneſs, or ſome other future Contingency. We are ſent
Prov. 6. 6. by *Solomon* to the *Ant*, *who provideth her Meat in Summer, and gathereth her Food in Harveſt.* Our Religion does not commend Improvidence to us: *If*
1 Tim. 5. 8. *any provide not for his own, and eſpecially for thoſe of his own Houſe, he hath denied the Faith, and is worſe than an Infidel.*

Mat. 6. 34. 'Tis true indeed 'tis ſaid, *Take no*
Phil. 4. 6. *thought for to morrow. And be carefull for nothing.* But certainly theſe places are rendred very defectively. The *Greek* word imports ſomething more than what *our Verſion* gives it. That care which we are to lay aſide is μέριμνα, an *anxious* and *diſtracting* one: *Take no thought*: i. e. *do not put your ſelves to pain*; be not *anxious* and *unquiet*. And be *carefull for nothing*; *i. e.* be not *unquiet*

Ne vous mettez point in peine. Verſ. Gallic.

quiet upon *any* account; do not *disquiet* and *vex* your selves. *I would have you without carefulness*, says St. *Paul*. Ἀμερίμνους, *without carefulness*: *not* without a *wise* and *provident Care*; but he would have them disengaged from *Inquietness* and *anxious* Cares, that they might *attend upon the Lord*, ἀπερισπάστως, *without distraction*. We must not be of *doubtfull Minds*.

Ne vous inquietez de rien. 1 Cor. 7. 32. *Degagez de soins & d'inquietudes.* v. 35. Luke 12. 29.

3. This Proposition must be understood *exclusively* to all *evil* Arts and Means whatever. We must *cast our care upon God*; and by no means divert for our relief to an evil Course, or any unlawfull Means. We are presently upon the words of my Text, exhorted, *to resist the Devil, stedfast in the Faith*. We must have a care, that in our Straits we do not imitate *Saul*, who went to the *Witch of Endor*. *If* we are *poor* we must not *steal*; and *if* we are at a *loss*, we must not seek to the *Devil* or any of *his Confederates*; but we must go to *God*, and place all our Trust and Confidence in *him*.

v. 9.

4. It must be understood *exclusively* to the *trusting* in the *most lawfull Means*. If we are *sick*, we may *use* the *Physician*, but we must *trust in God*. If we are in

want, we must be diligent in the *use* of *all lawful Means* for our Relief, but we must *confide* in *God alone*.

5. It must be understood in conjunction with an *holy* and *pious Life*. Be sure to *cast all your Care upon God*; but then you must *obey* him. If you leave to *him* the *care* of *this* Life, *you* must *take care* of a *better*: And if you would that *God* should *provide* for you, you must take care to *please him*. Our *Trust* in him must be accompanied with *well-doing*: And we have no assurance, that God will take our Burden upon him, unless we take great care to do his
Mat. 6. 33. Will. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these things*
Ps. 55. 23. *shall be added unto you. Cast thy Burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the Righteous to be moved.* If we would that God should bear *our Burden*, we must take upon us the *Yoke of Christ*. We must not think the *following Promise* belongs to *evil doers*: There's a *Saying* among the *Jewish Writers*, כלהמקבל רצרו *who ever undertakes the Yoak of the Law, shall be exempted from the Yoak of this lower World; on the other side, he that refuseth that, shall bear this.* So it is, we must

muſt *truſt* in *God*; but then we muſt *obey* him too, before the *following Promiſe* will *belong* to us. *Truſt in the Lord and do good; ſo ſhalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou ſhalt be fed.* Pſ. 37. 3. And when we are required to *commit the keeping of our Souls to God, as unto a faithfull Creator*, yet 'tis added, that we muſt do it *in well-doing*. We do in vain pretend that we truſt in God's *Mercy*, when we deſpiſe his *Commands*. We muſt not think his *Goodneſs* will ſhelter us from his *Juſtice*, and his *Truth*. If we would have God do *our Will*, we muſt take great care to do *his*: And not think we can *ſecure our Happineſs*, unleſs we *do our Duty*. 1 Pet. 4. 19.

6. This Propoſition muſt ſo be underſtood, as to exclude all *anxiety* of Mind; we muſt not torment and grieve our ſelves about Futurities, and things out of our power and reach. We muſt do God's Will, and then leave all Succeſſes to him. Be our ſtreight and preſſure what it will, to *him* we muſt apply our ſelves in all our Difficulties, and diſcharge our ſelves of all our anxious and unquiet Thoughts. 'Twas one of the Rules of *Pythagoras*, that a man ſhould not *eat his own Heart*. Our *Religion*

teaches us the *ſame* Leſſon here, and it *enables us* to *practiſe it*; which was *more* than *his Philoſophy* did. We are never more at eaſe, than when we caſt our Burden on God. The *Apoſtle's* words are very expreſs to this purpoſe: *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by Prayer and Supplication with Thankſgiving, let your Requeſts be made known unto God.* And then it follows, *And the Peace of God, which paſſeth all Underſtanding, ſhall keep your Hearts and Minds through Jeſus Chriſt.* But I proceed to ſhew

Phil 4. 6, 7.

II. The *Grounds* of this: What great *reaſon* we have to *caſt our care upon God:* And that you may take in the following *Severals.*

1. And firſt of all, the great *uneaſineſs* of this *Care* may be ground ſufficient to recommend this Duty to us. Our Worldly Care is a very heavy and uneaſie Load, a *Yoke that neither we, nor our Fathers were able to bear. The Sorrow of the World worketh Death.* There's no *end* of it; nor are we able to ſupport under it long. *Take heed to your ſelves, leaſt at any time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs;*

2 Cor. 7. 10.

Luke 21. 34.

neſs; it follows, καὶ μερίμναις βιωτικαῖς, *and cares of this life*. Our Worldly Care will overcharge us and bear us down: We ſhall be greatly diſtracted between the *care* of *getting*, and the *fear* of *loſing*. We ſhall be haled to and fro by the multiplicity of Objects and of Ends. Our Luſts will lord it over us; and we ſhall be full of diſquiet and pain. For we ſhall diſquiet our ſelves in vain; *wiſh* for what we cannot *get*; *fear* what we know not how to *avoid*; and *purſue* that which is not in our *power*. We ſhall in vain *complain*, without a *Remedy*; *mourn* without a *Comforter*; and from time to time be *baffled* and *diſappointed*. There's no *Slavery* like this; no *Tyrants* ſo cruel as our *Luſts*, and unſubdued *Affections*; no Man in Priſon, or Gally, in Chains and Fetters ſo wretched and uneaſie, as the *Servant of Sin*; who has as many *Maſters* as *Luſts*; and is upon the Rack and Wheel, full of Pain and Torment, whiles he is under *their* Command. Who can expreſs the Torment that Covetouſneſs and Pride, Luſt and Revenge, the love of Money and the Cares of this World put us to? *They that will be Rich fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurt-* 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10.

full Luſts, which drown Men in Deſtruction and Perdition. For the love of Money is the root of all Evil: Which while ſome coveted after, they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themſelves through with many Sorrows. The *Cares* of this Life rob us of the *Comforts* of it: They waſte our Fleſh and dry our Bones; they impair our Health and rob us of our Peace: They decay our Bodies; and endanger our Souls beſides. They are our *Fault* and our *Torment* too: They make us a Burden to our ſelves and others, and put us to a great pain.

2. As this Care is very uneaſie, ſo 'tis
Mat. 6.27. alſo *unprofitable: Which of you by taking thought can add one Cubit to his Stature?*
Luke 12. 26. *If ye then be not able to do that thing which is leaſt, why take ye thought for the reſt?* Our Care does no good, it does not at all alter the nature of things; it does not make *ſtraight* that which was *crooked*, nor *ſupply* what was *wanting*. It is of very little moment what our *Stature* is; whether we be tall or of a lower ſtature: Our *Life* and *Health* are *valuable* things; but for our *Stature* 'tis of little conſideration: But be it what 'twill, 'tis out of our power to determine; and all our Care cannot *add* to it:

it: Nay, we *cannot make one Hair white or black.* We trouble our Heads and Hearts about things that are *out of our reach*; and our Care cannot *alter* the *nature of things*, or *fruſtrate* any of the *Divine Appointments*: And we many times live to ſee, how very needleſs and unprofitable our Care and Solicitude was.

Theſe things are in the *Hands of God*, and not at *our* diſpoſe; and we do but intermeddle in that which we are not concerned in, when we diſquiet our ſelves about them. For if our utmoſt Endeavours will not ſucceed unleſs *God* proſper them, certainly our uneaſie Cares will not profit us. And ſo it is, we labour in vain without God's Bleſſing. *Except the Lord build the Houſe they labour in vain that build it: Except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain: It is vain for you to riſe up early, to ſit up late, to eat the Bread of Sorrows.* We *are* nothing, and *can do* nothing, *without God*: And as 'twas not our Care that *brought us into Being*, ſo cannot all our Care *preſerve our Being*, or any of the *Appendages* thereof. Pſ. 127. 1, 2.

3. It

3. It is also a very *unreasonable* and *unjust* thing. For *God* governs the World; 'tis none of *our* work. When we disquiet our selves, we seem to deny a *Providence*, and imply that the World is empty of *God* or of a *Providence*. 'Tis not for *us* to intermeddle in so *weighty* an Affair: Let *us* do our duty; and let *God* do what he thinks fit. We shall need have but *one* Care upon us, and that's the Care of *well-doing*. There's but *one thing needfull*; and we are very unreasonable if we neglect the Care of *that*, and mingle our selves with those Cares that belong not unto us. It is a very stupid piece of folly in us to disquiet our selves. It argues great *Insolence*, or great *Folly*: That we are ignorant of God and our selves. We cannot without great Pride and Folly think our selves fit to govern the World; and if we believe *God* reigns, *our Care* must be thought needless. We are so far from being able to *govern*, that we have not skill enough to *discern when* 'tis well done. We do not understand the *Works of God*, nor discern his great *Wisdom* in his Administration of Affairs. We should like what *he* does, were it not that we are
Ps. 36. 6. *short* in *our Understanding*. *Thy Mercy, O Lord,*

O Lord, is in the Heavens, and thy Faithfulneſs reacheth unto the Clouds: Thy Righteouſneſs is like the great Mountains; thy Judgments are a great Deep. O Lord thou preſerveſt Man and Beaſt. There's an infinite *Wiſdom* in the *Works of God*; and 'tis our *duty* to *adore* the *Divine Wiſdom*: but 'tis very unreaſonable that we ſhould *complain* againſt *his Work*; 'tis very great folly to call *this Wiſdom* into *queſtion*. *Children* are as fit to *govern Kingdoms*, and *Peaſants* to make *Laws*, as *we* are to *govern* the *World*, and *take care* of *our ſelves*.

4. We are *unfit* to take the care upon our ſelves. 'Tis not only a *Labour*, and a *Toil*, but 'tis a Burden *too big for us* to ſtand under: If it were left in our own hands, we ſhould ſoon ruine our ſelves, and never be able to effect what we deſign. And that which renders us unfit, is,

(1.) The *ſhortneſs* of our *Underſtanding*. We are not *wiſe* enough to know what is for our own good: We ſhould chooſe amiſs, and ruine our ſelves by our own choice: We ſhould, as Children without a Governour, chooſe what is hurtfull and pernicious. We have an overweening conceit of our ſelves if we think otherwiſe. Alas! we know not what

what to *pray for*, nor what to *desire*: Our very *Petitions* would turn to our *Destruction*, if God should be so easie as to hear us. We are safer much in God's *hands* than we could be in our *own*. He is *wiser* to *choose*; and we are as *dear* to *him* as to our selves. We desire *Riches*; but consider not whether we can digest and concoct them. We are for *Honour*; but know not how we can bear such an height. We do not know what our several Abilities are. There are some conditions and circumstances of Life we are not fit for: And we never take a *wiser* or a *safer* course, than when we leave it to *God* to choose for us.

Matt. 25. 15.

Juvenal. Sat. 10.

Permittes ipsis expendere numinibus quid
Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris;
Nam pro jucundis aptissima quæque dabunt Dii:
Charior est illis homo quam sibi. Nos animorum
Impulsu, & cæcâ magnâque cupidine ducti,
Conjugium petimus, partumque uxoris: at illis
Notum qui pueri, qualisque futura sit uxor.

We

We fondly deſire what would deſtroy us: And ſhould God hear our Prayers we ſhould ſoon find it ſo. 'Tis his great Mercy that he does not anſwer us. We would ſucceed in our Love, in our Traffick, and Merchandiſe; but poſſibly God ſees it better for us to be diſappointed. We would have Children; but God, it may be, knows 'tis better for us to have none.

If it were conſidered, we ſhould find the greateſt *Advantages* have happened to us through *Diſappointments*. And *that* which we have *bewailed*, we have lived to ſee we had great cauſe to *bleſs* God for. It has been well for many a man, that he has miſſed the *Preferment*, or the *Wife* he *courted*; that he has met with *Loſſes* in his *Eſtate*; that his *Health* has been *impaired*: He *had* been *undone*, if he had *not*. *David* was diſmiſſed by the *Philiſtin*; and he ſeems to ſtomach it, and take it ill; *What have I done!* (ſays he to *Achiſh*) *and what haſt thou found in thy Servant, ſo long as I have been with thee unto this day; that I may not go fight againſt the Enemies of my Lord the King?* Well, 'twas a *Diſappointment*, and looked like a *Reproach*: But 'twas a good Providence for *David* that he

1 Sam. 29. 8.

he did not go. For in the mean time the *Amalekites* had burnt *Ziklag*, taken away the Wives and Children of *David* and his Companions: and *David*'s return was ſeaſonable for the reſcue and relief of his neareſt Relatives. *Joſeph* is *ſold* into *Egypt* by *Envy*, and *impriſoned* by a *Lye*: *Jacob* mourns for his Son; and without doubt *Joſeph* was afflicted at his falſe Impriſonment; but yet theſe Diſappointments were great Mercies to *Joſeph* and his *Father's Houſe*. His *Impriſonment* was the occaſion of his *Advancement*; 'twas his paſſage to Honour and Greatneſs: And yet ſure neither *Jacob* nor *Joſeph* would have *choſen* this courſe.

So it is, we do not know what to chooſe, nor what to ask: Our way is *hid*, and we diſcern it not. We are happy when we do not know it; and are then moſt to be pitied when we rejoice moſt. We mourn when we ſhould rejoyce, and are glad when we have the greateſt cauſe to mourn.

(2.) The *defect* of our *power* to bring Deſigns to paſs. Were we *wiſe* enough to *chooſe*, yet have we not *ſtrength* enough to *accompliſh* our Deſign. *We* may *propound*; but *God diſpoſeth*. *Hominis*

minis eſt animam præparare, as the Vulgar renders the words, *The Preparations of the Heart of man*, i. e. Man does propound, he plots and contrives: But then it follows, *the anſwer of the Tongue is from the Lord*, i. e. *God* diſpoſeth of the *Event* of things: Or as it follows; *A man's Heart deviſeth his way; but the Lord directeth his ſteps.* Again, *There are many devices in a man's Heart; nevertheleſs the Counſel of the Lord, that ſhall ſtand.* Whatever *we contrive*, *we* can *do nothing* without *God:* And when our Plot is laid fairly, and all things look hopefully, yet does *God* by his Providence *over-rule* all, and let us ſee that we have no reaſon to rely upon our own Wiſdom and Strength. Indeed, we *value our ſelves* by our Worldly Wiſdom and Power, by our Numbers and Strength. When we *fight*, we promiſe our ſelves *Victory* from our *puiſſant Armies:* When we *run* we expect the *Race* from the *ſwifteſt* among us. When we *Trade*, we expect much from our *diligence* and *Wiſdom:* And every man does confidently *expect* as he *provides.* But yet we have often ſeen, That *the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battel to the Strong, neither yet Bread to the Wiſe,* Prov. 16. 1. v. 9. Prov. 19. 21. Eccl. 9. 11.

nor

nor yet Riches to Men of Underſtanding, nor yet Favour to Men of Skill. How many puiſſant *Armies* have been defeated by ſmaller Numbers! How many cunning *Plots* have been defeated by an unſeen hand! How many *wiſe* and *diligent* Men have there been diſappointed! This has often happened, becauſe Men have *truſted* in theſe things; and that we might ſee that *God over-rules. Some truſt in Chariots, and ſome in Horſes:* This we are very prone to do; but the good Man looks higher: *But we will remember the Name of the Lord our God.* And how much better it is ſo to do, appears from what follows: *They are brought down and fallen; but we are riſen and ſtand upright.*

Pſ. 20. 7, 8.

When *God* is *with us*, we are *ſtrong*; we are *wiſe* when we are led by his Counſels: And though we fooliſhly cry up *worldly* Power and Might, yet, *There's no King ſaved by the multitude of an hoſt; a mighty man is not delivered by much Strength: An Horſe is a vain thing for ſafety; neither ſhall he deliver any by his great Strength.* We fondly impute Effects to our own Wiſdom and Conduct; whereas there's nothing due to us: And we may very eaſily ſee it, if we

Pſ. 33. 16, 17.

we do not resolve to shut our Eyes.

Indeed, great Successes many times follow upon our Care and Provision; but though they are the *Consequent* they are not the *Effect* of our Care. And if we would *trace* things to their true *Original*, we must be forced to *own God* in *all*. And the great Inventions that we magnifie, and the great *turns* of *Affairs* owe their *Original* to a *Divine Cause*; and the over-ruling hand of *God* is very evidently seen in them. Many times this is so evident, that nothing can be plainer; that we might say, *Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy Name be the Praise.*

For besides that, the *Effect* has gone *beyond* the *Power* of the *Second Cause*, it has also surpass'd the *Design* and the *Intention* of the *Inferiour Agent*, or *Instrument* that God has made use of.

And perhaps did we well consider things, we should find, that it has been thus in *most* of the great *Revolutions* in the World, and the greatest and most usefull *Inventions*. When we have looked for something *else*, we have many times light on somewhat that we *looked not* for; and have done as *Saul* did, who met with a *Kingdom*, when he only looked for his *Father's Asses*; or like him

that *digged* under his *Tree* for a *Treaſure* that he expected; who, though he *miſſed* of *that*, yet he made his *Tree* the *more fruitfull* by *digging* about its *Roots*. We read of a certain *Painter*, that when he had drawn the Picture of a *panting* and *wearied Dog*, yet he was not able to repreſent to the life the *moiſture* about his Mouth; but when with Anger he threw his Spunge at the Piece, he did *that* by *chance*, which by *art* he could not do. So it is in the great *Inventions* and *Mutations* of the World; there's nothing owing to Man, but the *God*, whom we neglect to praiſe, *brings* the work to *paſs*.

For *our Strength* is *Weakneſs*, and *our Wiſdom Folly*, and *our Care* and *Providence* is *trifling* and *ineffective*. *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himſelf: It is not in man that walketh to direct his ſteps.* I proceed Jer. 10. 23.

III. To make Uſe of what hath been ſaid.

1. This may ſerve to *reprove* our *ſolicitous* and *diſtracting Cares*, even for the Neceſſaries of this Life. And *then* eſpecially is the *anxious* Care *reproveable*, when 'tis ſeparated from the Care of *well-*

well-doing. There are thoſe that take care for *every thing* but that which they are *moſt concerned* in. They take care for their *Bodies*, none of their *Souls*. They *truſt God* for nothing but for their *Souls*; and *that* too is becauſe they are *ſtupid*, and do not *value* them.

But what wretched Infidelity is this? Do we *believe* a God and Providence, and do we live as if there were *none*? If *there be a God, what needs our Care*? If there be *none*, *what will it avail us*? Why do we *profeſs* to *know God*, and *deny* him in *our Works*? Why do we *diſquiet our ſelves in vain*? If *God* take *care*, *ours* is not needfull; and if *he* do *not*, *what* will *ours avail*? There's but *one thing needfull*: Why do we *neglect that*, and *trouble our ſelves about many things*? Are we *fond* of our *Miſery*, and will we *embrace* our *Torment* and our *Plague*? Are we *wiſer* than *God*, and will we *give Laws* to the *Almighty*? Does not *God know*, *is there no knowledge in the moſt high*?

2. We may hence be *exhorted* to *caſt all our care upon God.* Methinks *enough* has been ſaid to perſwade us to *caſt off* the *Burden* from *our ſelves*; and if once we be perſwaded to *that* we ſhall

not find *where elſe* to place it: We can never diſpoſe of it *ſo well*, as when we follow the Advice of my *Text*. I ſhall not need uſe any *Motives* to it in this place: We can have but one *Objection* and *Doubt* in the caſe; and that is this. Perhaps we may queſtion, whether the *Divine Majeſty* will ſo far *humble himſelf* as to be *concerned* in *our ſmall* Affairs. There are many great and good *men* we durſt truſt, if we could engage them: We *cannot doubt* of *God's Power*; but perhaps we *queſtion* his *Will*. This is *all* we have to ſay, and this is *removed* by the *Apoſtle*; *For he careth for you.* I now proceed to the *Second Propoſition.*

SER-

SERMON V.

1 PET. V. 7.

Caſting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

II. THAT *God* taketh a particular *care* of us. *For he careth for you.*

And now for the better ſpeaking to this *Propoſition*, I ſhall

Firſt, Prove the *truth* of it; or ſhew you that ſo it is, that *God* takes a particular *care* of good men, that *caſt their Care upon him.*

Secondly, I ſhall take off an *Objection* that will lie in my way.

Thirdly, I ſhall make ſome *Uſe* of what I ſhall have ſaid.

And before I begin with the *firſt* of theſe, I ſhall only premiſe ſomething of

the neceſſity of our being throughly perſwaded of the Providence and Care of God. For *he that comes unto God muſt* not only *believe that he is*, but *that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.*

Heb. 11. 6.

1. 'Tis much for the *encouragement* of us in true *Piety* and all *Religious* Services, that we be throughly perſwaded of God's particular care of us. If we believe *God* takes *no notice* of us, we ſhall ſerve him, either *not at all*, or *very coldly*. What *encouragement* ſhall we have to *pray* to him, if we believe he *hears us not*, or that he will not concern himſelf in our Affairs? What motive ſhall we have to *truſt* him, or to *fear* him? We ſhall have little *heart* to *pray* to him in our *needs*; and think we have ſmall reaſon to give *him* thanks for his *Mercies*. Nay, more than this, we ſhall be tempted to *queſtion his Being*, when once we come to *doubt* of *his Providence*: *Mihi enim, qui nihil agit, eſſe omnino non videtur.* And when we come to this we are in the way to all manner of wickedneſs. Such an one the *Pſalmiſt* deſcribes, *His Mouth is full of Curſing, and Deceit, and Fraud; under his Tongue is Miſchief and Vanity*, &c. But no *wonder*,

Cicero de Nat. Deorum, l. 2.

der, when 'tis ſaid of him, *God is not in all his thoughts: And he hath ſaid in his Heart, God hath forgotten: He hideth his Face, he will never ſee it. The Fool hath ſaid in his Heart there is no God:* And then it follows; *They are corrupt, they have done abominable Works; there is none that doth good.* There's nothing more effectual to incline us to all manner of wickedneſs, than ſetting *God* at a great diſtance from us. No wonder that the *evil Servant* ſhould *ſmite* his *Fellow-Servants*, and *eat and drink with the Drunken*, when we find him ſaying, *My Lord delayeth his coming.* 'Tis God's Omnipreſence and Providence that begets in us an Awe and Reverence. Who is there among us that regards the great *Turk*, or the Laws of a *Foreign King*? They are *formidable* indeed, but 'tis *where* they *govern*, and among their *own Subjects*.

Pſ. 10. 4, 7, 11. Pſ. 73. 11. with v. 6, 8, 9. Pſ. 94. 7. Pſ. 14. 1. Matt. 24. 48, 49.

If God take no care of his Servants, it is not to be imagined, that our Prayers and Supplications will at all advantage us; all Religion would ſoon fail, if this were true. We ſhall ſerve God very indifferently, if we think our Labour will be in vain. A cold Prayer will ſerve when we expect no Anſwer: And

our Praiſes will be very formal, when we cannot aſcribe our Mercies to him. 'Tis of great moment to believe it to be, not only our *Duty* but our *Intereſt* to ſerve God.

2. 'Tis much for our *Comfort*, and *Support* under all our Afflictions, to believe God's Care and Providence. *The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice, let the multitude of the Iſles be glad thereof.* This lower World would be much more uneaſie than it is, were it not for this belief. 'Tis *this* that makes it tolerable: we were in ill plight, were we governed by Fate or Chance. We might *in vain complain*; but there would be *none to pity* and *relieve us*. Whereas now let what will happen, the good man is aſſured that it is not without the knowledge of God. And this does, above all Conſiderations, quiet him, that God does it. *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it. Not as I will, but as thou wilt. The Will of the Lord be done.* Τί μοι ζῶν ἐν κόσμῳ κενῷ θεῶν, ἢ προνοίας κενῷ; if the World were empty of *God* and a *Providence*, it were a moſt uncomfortable Wilderneſs,

Pſ. 97. 1.

1 Sam. 3. 18.
Job 1.
Pſ. 39. 9.
Matt. 26. 39.
Act. 21. 14.

Marc. Antonin. l. 2. §. 8.

Wilderneſs. We ſhould be unfit to *take care of our ſelves*; and yet want the *care* of *him* that is *mightier* and *wiſer* than *our ſelves*. I now proceed to prove,

I. That God takes a particular *care* of *good men* that *caſt their care upon him.* Now for the proof of this, I offer the following *Severals*; which (admitting that there is a God) will ſufficiently infer this Concluſion.

1. That it is very *becoming the Divine Perfection* that it ſhould be ſo. If we allow that God is, we muſt grant him to be the greateſt and the beſt of Beings; the Author of all other things, and infinitely ſurpaſſing the work of his own hands. We muſt believe him *Omnipotent*, *infinitely Wiſe*, *Juſt*, and *Good*: He cannot want *Might* or *Wiſdom*: and then we ſhall not need to doubt of his *Care* of *good men*, if we remember that his *Goodneſs* holds proportion with his *Power* and *Wiſdom*. 'Tis very reaſonable to believe all this of God; and conſequently, to believe that he takes care of us. There's no *good Man* will fail to help his *Friend*; no *kind Father* will forſake his *Child*. They may *not* be *able*, but will be *ready* to help: They may

may not *diſcern*; but ſtill they want not an *Inclination*. But where is no defect of *Wiſdom* to chooſe, of *Power* to effect, and of *Goodneſs* to incline, there can be no doubt left of *Care* and *Providence*. Now there are none of theſe, *Power*, *Wiſdom*, and *Goodneſs*, but are imply'd in the very notion of a *Deity*: And 'tis impoſſible we ſhould have any right notion of the *Divine Nature*, but we muſt think him to be *infinite* in *Power*, *Wiſdom*, and *Goodneſs*. If we conceive *otherwiſe*, we frame an *Idol* of *our own*; but are far removed from a right notion of God: If this be *granted*, we cannot make any doubt of his Care of good Men.

His *Power* and his *Wiſdom*, we cannot doubt of; and have as little reaſon to queſtion his *Goodneſs*. This is as much his *Eſſence*, and as *Infinite* as the other are: And the *Goodneſs* of *God* is as apparent in its Effects, as his *Power* and *Wiſdom*: and by the very ſame *mediums* that we judge him to be *Wiſe* and *Mighty*, we muſt conclude him to be *Good* alſo. He is *Optimus* as well as *Maximus*;

Cicero de Natura Deorum, l. 2. *Et quidem antè optimus*, i. e. *beneficentiſſimus, quàm maximus: Quia majus eſt, certéque*

certéque gratius, prodeſſe omnibus, quàm opes magnas habere. Hence was it that the Heathens worſhipped thoſe for *Gods*, of whoſe Beneficence they did partake. And there can be *no Notion* of a *Deity*, *preceding* that of *Goodneſs*. We may as well think him not to be, as not to be *good*.

Beſides that, whatever *Goodneſs* is in the *Creature* is but a *Stream* of that *infinite Ocean*; but a little *Ray* of that inexhauſted *Light*; a ſhort and a very imperfect *Image* of the Divine *Bounty* and *Good-will*. And God does as much exceed his *Creatures*, yea, the *beſt* of them, in *Goodneſs*, as he exceeds them in *Power* and *Wiſdom*.

So that if there be any *Bowels* in a *Parent*, any *Love* in a *Friend*, any *Faith* in a *good* Man, *God* muſt needs be *good* himſelf; from *whom all theſe* in *us* are derived, and from *whom* they ſpring. *Inter Bonos viros & Deum amicitia eſt*, we cannot then ſuſpect God's Kindneſs, and his readineſs to do us good. *Patrium habet adversùs bonos viros amorem, & eos fortiùs amat.* We may rather ſuſpect a *Mother's* Care of her *ſucking Child*, than *God's* Care of a *good Man*. *A Mother may forget* (though ſhe ſeldom *Senec.*

dom does that) but *God will not forget.*

2. That it is very evident that God takes care of all *other Creatures*, and therefore we need not doubt his care of *good Men.* 'Tis our *Saviour's* Argument, and a very forceable one; *Behold the Fowls of the Air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Consider the Lilies of the Field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even* Solomon *in all his glory, was not arayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so cloath the Grass of the Field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the Oven, shall he not much more cloath you, O ye of little Faith?*

Mat. 6. 26, 29, 30.

We may read the Providence and Care of God if we will be but at the pains to look about us: we shall find the World is full of Witnesses of the Divine Care. There are many things that speak it, tho' we may be so stupid as not to attend. Who has *drawn* out the *Curtain of the Heavens?* Who has *adorned* it with *Sun, Moon,* and *Stars?* Who is it that sets them *a going*, and determines their *Motions* and several *Stages?* Who feeds all

all the *Fowls* of Heaven, and cloaths the *Earth* with Plenty and Increaſe? Whence is the excellent *Harmony* of the *World*? Whence all its *Store* and *Bravery*?

Are all things by *Chance* or *Fortune*; by a lucky coalition of *Atoms* into this *Form* and *Figure*? Can any thing be more ſtupid and ſenſeleſs? any thing more unaccountable?

May we not as well ſuppoſe theſe *Atoms* might have built *Houſes* and *furniſhed* them when they had done, as have *made* the *World*? And yet who can ſhew the leaſt *Portal* or *Building* of *their* ſetting up!

We never ſee a *Ship* ſailing on the Main, but we believe it had a *Builder* at *firſt*, and has a *Pilot ſtill*. We never ſee a *fair Houſe* and *well-governed Family*, but we believe it had an *Architect*, and has a *Governour*! When we read a witty Book, we preſume it had an *Author*; and that the *Letters* did not by *chance light* into that *order* in which we find them: We do not think a *Clock*, or *Watch* will go right, without *ſome one* to wind it up, and order its Motions. And yet ſo ſottiſh and ſo ſtupid are *we*, that can *look abroad* in the *World*, and *not adore* the *God* that *made* it and *ſuſtains* it.

We

We may every where read God's Providence and Care, in the *Ant* and *Fly*, in the *leaſt* and *meaneſt Creatures*: And if God take care of *theſe*, can we doubt
Pſ. 145. of his care of *good men*? *He opens his hand and feeds every living Creature; The Eyes of all things look upon him.* He gives them Sagacity, and preſerves their Breath and Being: They live without Care and Toil, and yet they are fed.

Nay, the *worſt of men* God feeds and
Mat. 5. 45. cloaths: He *cauſes his Sun to riſe upon the evil, as well as upon the good.*

3. God hath aſſured us by his *Word*, that he takes a very *particular care* of *good men.*

Matth. 10. 29, 30. Our Saviour's words are plain: *Are not two Sparrows ſold for a Farthing? and one of them ſhall not fall on the Ground without your Father. But the very Hairs of your Head are numbred.* Can there be any thing more expreſs than this? or any thing give us plainer aſſurance of God's particular Providence? Among the *Ancients* there were thoſe that *own'd a God*, and *denyed a Providence*: That *own'd* a *Providence*, but then *denyed* a *particular care* of *God* about our *little* and *earthly concerns*: but our *Saviour's words* put it *out of doubt.* There's nothing

thing happens without God; not the leaſt mutation whatſoever. *Chriſtian Religion* gives us the utmoſt *aſſurance* of this Truth. For beſides what I have ſaid before,

The *Services* that *Chriſtian Religion* obliges us to, teach us this Truth. It bids us *pray*; but to what purpoſe, if God regard us not? It bids us *give thanks*; but what need of that, if our Bleſſings come by chance? It bids us *faſt, and give Alms in ſecret*; but why ſhould it, if God's Eye ſee it not? It bids us *truſt in God*; but what reaſon can there be for that, if he regard us not? Every Service teaches us this Leſſon: And if we believe not God's Care, we cannot underſtand what theſe things ſhould mean.

4. The *Mercies* which all good men receive from God, are a great Argument of his Care of them. God has all along given great evidences of the Care of his People: *Our Father's truſted in thee; they truſted and thou didſt deliver them. They cryed unto thee and were delivered; they truſted in thee, and were not confounded.— For he hath not deſpiſed nor abhorred the Affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his Face from him: but when he cried unto him he heard.* Pſ. 22. 4, 5, 24.

How

How many *Examples* had the *Iſraelites* of God's particular care of Holy Men from time to time! They might read it plainly in their Records: *They* and *their Fathers* were preſerved by *Miracles* of *Providences*. 'Twas not *their* Might and Power, not *their* Wiſdom and Numbers, that preſerved them; but the tender Care of *God*. 'Twas a *miraculous Providence* and *Care* that preſerved their *Patriarchs* in a *Famine*, that brought *them* out of *Egypt*, that *fed* and kept them in the *Wilderneſs*, and *defended* them in *their own* Land. And they were *preſerved*, till they abandoned God, and were paſt all remedy. 'Twas a *miraculous Providence* that delivered *Abraham* from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, that advanced *Joſeph* from Priſon *to Dignity*, that *reſcued* their *Fathers* from the *Egyptian Bondage*, that *fed* them in the *Deſart*, and *introduced* them and *preſerved* them in *their own* Land; and that after that *brought* them *back*.

And for the *Chriſtian Church*, who can expreſs God's Care over it? The Malice of the *Jews*, the Power, and Malice, and Wit of the *Heathen* World conſpired againſt it. Our *Lord* was hanged on a Tree; his *firſt Followers* were

were tortured and put to death: *Turks* and *Pagans*, *Jews* and *Infidels*, *open Enemies* and *falſe Friends*, made an Head againſt it; and yet it was and is preſerved: And *we* enjoy the *Sincere Profeſſion* of it, maugre all the *Spite* of the *Heathen People*, and all the *Fraud* and *Cruelty* of the *Man of Sin*. *This was the Lord's doing.*

Nay, *where* is there *any good Man* to be found, that hath put his *Truſt* in *God*, and has been *deceived?* or *who* among us is at a loſs to find Arguments of the Divine Care? we ſhall not need to *go far*, not to aſcend into the Heavens, or go into the Deep: *God* has provided for us when we were capable of no Care of *our own*. He has kept and preſerved us, when we had no power to preſerve our ſelves. *He has preſerved our Eyes from tears, and our Feet from falling, and our Soul from death.* But I proceed

II. To take off an *Objection* that lies in my way: And 'tis this:

If *God* take a *particular care* of *good men*, how comes it to paſs that good Men meet with the worſt of things? For ſo 'tis obſerved to happen frequently in this World. *Objection.*

Answer. In answer to this, I shall desire you to consider the following *Severals.*

1. The *Persons* upon whom these Evils fall.

2. The *Things* themselves.

3 The *Ends* and *Usefulness* of these things, or the *Occasions* of good that they do afford us.

4. and *Lastly*, The *Supports* which God affords under them.

1. The *Persons* upon whom these things fall. And they are said to be good Men. But 'tis to be consider'd,

(1.) That it is many times but supposed; but 'tis not always so. *God* knows who are his; but *we* many times know it not. We ought in *Charity* to think all Men good, where we are not certain of the contrary: But this Judgment of *Charity*, is not always according to *Truth*. We are not sure that all *are* good that *seem* to be so. A Man may deceive *himself*; much more *us*. *Hypocrisie* may lie under the disguise of *Piety*: And he that is not obnoxious to *our* just censure, may yet be liable to the Judgment of *God*.

'Tis much more easie to discern a Man to be *Wicked*, than to be *Pious* and *truly good*. The *works of the flesh are manifest*;

feſt; but ſo are not many of *the fruits of the Spirit. Bonum ex integris, malum ex quolibet defectu. Many* things muſt concur to make us *good*; but ſome *one* Vice may very juſtly denominate us *evil. Goodneſs* and *true Piety* are very *comprehenſive*: And 'tis much to be feared that the number of thoſe that are univerſally and *ſtrictly* Pious and Virtuous, is very *ſmall.*

(2.) Suppoſing theſe Sufferers *ſincerely* Pious and Good, yet they are but *imperfectly* ſo. There's ſome *Folly* bound up in the Heart of the *beſt* and *wiſeſt* Man: There's a *defect* in the moſt *perfect Saint*: And what Injuſtice is there in chaſtiſing the Follies of a good man? eſpecially when this Chaſtiſement is for his Emendation; as I ſhall ſhew afterwards it is. 'Tis Folly and Fondneſs to ſuffer an, otherwiſe, *towardly Child*, to go on in any *Evil* and *unbecoming Courſe*: 'Tis a greater kindneſs to *correct*, than to *indulge* him. There's no man ſo *good*, but does ſometime *go aſtray*: And 'tis no Impeachment of the *Divine Providence* to correct the beſt of men when they do amiſs. This is *juſt*; and 'tis very conſiſtent with *God's Care* and *good Providence*: It rather *confirms* than *denys* it.

Pſ. 89. 20. v. 22. *I have found* David *my Servant, with my holy Oyl have I anointed him. The Enemy ſhall not exact upon him, nor the* v. 27, 28, 29. *Son of Wickedneſs afflict him. Alſo I will make him my Firſt-born, higher than the Kings of the Earth. My Mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my Covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him. His Seed alſo will I make to endure for ever, and his Throne as the Days of Heaven.* Theſe *Promiſes* are large; and they were *verify'd* both in the *Type* and *Anti-type*. But all theſe great things do not imply that *David's Children* might not be *chaſtiſed:* They may be *corrected* for their *Sins*; and *this* be no diminution to the Promiſe, no Impeachment of God's v. 30, 32, 33, 34. Care: It follows, *If his Children forſake my Law, and walk not in my Judgments,— then will I viſit their Tranſgreſſion with a Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes. Nevertheleſs my Loving-kindneſs I will not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my Faithfulneſs to fail: my Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my Lips.* There can never be any *Injuſtice* in God's correcting his People; there is *Mercy* and Heb. 12. 6. *Kindneſs* in it. *Whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth.* If God ſhould *not* do it we

we might rather *impeach* his *Care*, and *doubt* his *Providence*. We commend the Care of that *Maſter* of a *Family* that does *correct* the *Diſorders* of his *own Houſe*. Good men are God's peculiar. *You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth; therefore will I puniſh you for all your Iniquities.* Not to do it would be Cruelty and Diſ-regard; and 'tis the *greateſt plague* of all, to meet with *none*. 'Tis ſaid of the *worſt* of men, *They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men.* And ſure 'twas a ſevere *Threat*, no merciſull *Promiſe* which we read, *I will not puniſh your Daughters when they commit Whoredom, nor your Spouſes when they commit Adultery.* So then, as the *faults* of *good men* make it *juſt*, ſo their *peculiar relation* to *God*, makes it *neceſſary*: God *may do* it becauſe *they deſerve* it; and he *does* it becauſe *they* are *his*. There is *Juſtice* in it, and *Kindneſs* alſo.

Amos 3. 2.

Pſ. 73. 5.

Hoſe. 4. 14.

Suppoſe now, the good man *ſuffer*; yet has he *deſerved* it from God. *Suppoſe* him to be *ſincerely good*; yet he is not *perfectly* ſo. He *fails* in *many* things: He is too *cold* in his *Prayers*, or too *weak* in his *Faith*, or too *limited* in his *Charity*, or too *propenſe* to *this World*:

Let him be *Gold*; yet is there *ſome Droſs.*

2. Let us conſider the *things* which the good man *ſuffers.* He meets with *Evils*, 'tis true, but *what* Evils are they; how *great* and how *long? What* are the *Proportions* to *his Demerits* or to *his Mercies*? now 'tis to be conſidered,

(1.) That the *Evils* he meets with are *not ſtrictly ſuch.* They are *Evils*, I grant, but of the *leſſer* Size and Character. *That's* the *great Evil* that *makes us ſo:* And ſo is *not that* which is *conſiſtent* with real *Goodneſs.* Poverty, Reſtraint, Reproach, Sickneſs, and Death, are *Evils*, indeed; but not *ſuch Evils*, as Pride, Wantonneſs, Profaneneſs, a guilty Mind, and unquiet Conſcience. They are *Evils*; but they are *tolerable* ones. *The Spirit of a Man may bear his Infirmity: but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* A good man may be *killed*, but not *hurt.* Men may kill his *Body*, *not* his *Soul.* He may be *baniſhed* from his *Country*, not from his *God.* Men may make him *Poor*; they cannot make him Covetous or Proud, Earthly and Senſual. They may load him with *Calumnies*; with *Guilt* they cannot. He hath a *good* that cannot be taken by *Violence.* He may

may fall under the *Rage* of a *Tyrant*; but cannot by that force *loſe his Integrity*. And if they take away his *Life* by a ſhamefull *Death*; *they* muſt die *too*: And if *Violence* take *his* away, *Nature* (or *God* rather) will put an end to *theirs*, and would have done as much by *him* had *they* let him alone. And this *Socrates* told the men of *Athens*, when they threatned to take away his Life: 'Twas *no more* they took, than what would have fallen of *it ſelf*. And 'tis a thing of little moment what our *death* be, whether Natural or Violent, Honourable or Shamefull, if our *Life* have been good: *Mala mors putanda non eſt quam bona vita præceſſerit.* This is the *greateſt Evil* the *good man* meets with: and yet *to the good man* it cannot be *great*. He *muſt* have *died*; he was mortal always: and that he dies *thus* is no great matter. Aug. de Civit. Dei, *l.* 1. *c.* 11.

(2.) The *Evils* that he meets with are but *Temporal* ones: *Sharp* they may be; but then they are *ſhort*: It may be a *Fiery-tryal*; but 'tis not *Everlaſting-burnings*. It is nothing compared with the *pains* of *Hell*, or with the *glories* of *Heaven*.

If we consider the Sorrows of the Miserable in another Life, we shall not think ours great. *Now* the *good man* meets with *all his pain*; there's *none* in *reversion* at all. He hath *all his Evils here*: But *who* can *express* the *Misery* of the *Dead* and *Damned*! *Their Misery* will have *no end*, *excludes* all *hope*, *exceeds* all that can be *expressed*.

And then if we think of the *Joys* of *Heaven*, that are the Portion of the pious and godly Men, we shall find no cause to doubt of God's Care and Providence at all. Does the *Good suffer*? But God has prepared for *him* a *Kingdom*, a *state* of *Joy*, *where all tears shall* for ever *be wiped from his eyes*. If we would but look off from the *Evils* of *this*, to the *Glories* of the *next Life*, we should not murmur against the Providence of God. *For which cause we faint not;—*

2 Cor. 4. 16, 17, 18. *for our light affliction that is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen*, &c.

Rom 8 18. *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

I proceed

3. To

3. To consider the *Ends* and *Usefulness* of these things, or the *Occasions* of *Good* that these very *Evils* do afford. For though we call these Sufferings, *Evils*, which good men meet with, yet are they the *occasions* of very much *Good*.

(1.) It is for the *good* of the *World*, that *good men* meet with *evil things*: By this the *World* is convinced of the *truth* of *Religion*, that 'tis a *reality*, that will bear men up when all other things fail them. The patient sufferings of holy men, have not only *adorned* but *propagated Christianity*. It has been a means of begetting *new Converts* to the Faith: and men have enquired diligently after *that Religion*, whose Proselytes have persisted in its profession with an undaunted Resolution. This has confirmed the Truth more effectually, than Books and subtle Arguments: And they that durst *die* for their Religion, did spread it *more* than they that barely *disputed* for it: *Thus* the Truth got ground.

The World was full of Prejudices against *Christianity*, and against *Christians*, till they saw how readily they *laid down* their *Lives* for the Truth. Had *they declined* to *suffer*, the *Religion* had been *rooted out* long ago. That 'tis *spread* Lactant. Instit. l. 5. c. 23.

so

ſo far, and has *continued ſo long*, is, under God, to be imputed, in great part, to *this*. So that we may bleſs God for the *Patience* and *Conſtancy* of his Servants; which they had not had *occaſion* to have ſhewn, had they not met with *Evils*.

The *worſt* of men might by this means have been made *better*. And doubtleſs God intended it for the *good* of the *Infidel* and *Unbelieving* World.

'Tis an eaſie thing to *profeſs Chriſtianity* when it *coſts* us *nothing* to do it. 'Tis no demonſtration of our Sincerity to profeſs, when there is no danger.

(2.) As it is for the good of the *World*, ſo it is alſo for the good of thoſe *pious Men* that ſuffer. They are *gainers* by their *troubles*, and this does farther clear the Care and Providence of God over good Men.

This may ſeem ſtrange, that ſevere Afflictions ſhould be for our Advantage: That I ſhould bury my Child, and deareſt Friend; loſe my Eſtate, be caſt in a juſt Cauſe, meet with Contempt and Scorn. The *Wife* that buries her *Husband*, the *Father* that buries his *Child* or *Friend*, cannot ſee *how* this *can be*.

And

And yet we *know*, that Fire and the Lance, rough and ungentle Potions and Methods cure ſome men, who would elſe have periſhed. *Joſeph's Impriſonment* was *no likely way* to Dignity; but yet 'twas the *occaſion* of his riſe. Theſe things that I am ſpeaking of are indeed *hard Sayings*, and we do not preſently underſtand them. But what *Jeſus* ſaid to *Peter* we find verify'd in the caſe before us. *What I do thou knowſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* We often live to underſtand, what once ſeemed a ſtrange Providence to us. *Clay and Spittle*, one would think, might *put out* a man's *Eyes*; yet we know our *Saviour*, did by them, *cure* a *blind man*. Now the *Miſeries* that happen to *good men* are very great *occaſions* of *good* to them. John 13.7.

Firſt, They conduce much to the deſtroying of their remaining Luſts: Our *evil habits* are not rooted out all *at once*: And there is ſome *folly bound up in the Hearts* of *good men*, which this *Rod of Correction* ſerves to the *beating out*. *Proſperity* generally *hides* our Wickedneſs from us: *Afflictions* are *faithful Friends*, they *tell us* our *Faults*, and they *conduce* toward our *Amendment*: *Before I was afflicted I went aſtray, but now have I kept* Pſ. 119.67.

v. 71. *I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes.*

There is nothing so formidable, as a constant and uninterrupted Prosperity. Sen. Cur bon. vir mal. c. 3. *Nihil mihi videtur infelicius eo, cui nihil unquam evenit adversi*; was an excellent Speech of *Demetrius*. We are generally *worse* for being *prosperous*: And 'tis too often so, that our *Vices* and our *Prosperity* hold proportion and grow together. 'Tis a great peradventure if we do not *decline* in *Goodness*, as we *grow great*: *Miserum te judico quod nunquam fuisti miser.*

Secondly, They are very useful to *wean* us from *this World*; and 'tis much our *Interest* to be weaned from it. These *Sorrows* teach us how *vain* a thing *this World* is: We *know* but *little* of it till we come to *suffer*. He that meets with nothing but *Prosperity* knows but *part* of the *World*, the *fair* and *glozing side* of it: And he that knows no more, runs a great hazard. The *Shepherd* in the *Fable*, that turned *Merchant*, *lost* his *Adventure* upon the rough Seas: but he *got* this *Wisdom* by it, *not to trust* the *Sea* when 'twas *calm*. The *World* does us the *greatest* mischief many times when it

it *ſmiles:* And 'tis a great *proficiency* to be able to *contemn* the *Smiles* and *Courtſhip* of the *World.*

Thirdly, They are of great uſe to make us more *earneſt* Contenders for *Heaven.* They bring the good man *nearer* to *God* and to his *Happineſs.* God does by this means prepare the *good man* for *himſelf.* The *future Glory* will be more deſirable after the *Contempt* he meets with *here:* And if he meet with *Poverty* and *Pain*, it does but make him contend more *earneſtly* for the Joys and plentifull Glories of a *future ſtate:* And what he *loſes below*, he *gains above.* And 'tis a very *happy* occaſion, *whatever* it is, that puts us upon Endeavours after an *incorruptible Crown.* We ſhould think *too little* of *Heaven*, if we met with nothing here but *Plenty* and *Eaſe.*

Fourthly, They give us an *Experiment* of *our ſelves:* We know *not* what we are, till we are tryed. 'Tis eaſie to be Valiant where there is no danger: Our *Fortitude* is ſeen when we are ſurrounded with *potent Enemies.* 'Tis the *Storm* that ſhews the *Skill* and *Courage* of the *Seaman.* We are *reproached*; we ſhall not elſe know whether we can *pray for them* that *reproach* us. We are *injured*;

now

now we may learn whether we can *forgive an Enemy*. We *loſe* our *Goods*; *now* we ſhall know whether our *Faith* and *Patience* be genuine. We are *affronted*; *now* we ſhall experiment our *Meekneſs*. We are *ſlighted*; we ſhall ſoon find whether we are *Humble* or not: If theſe things had not happened, the Graces of good men had not been known to others, nor to themſelves. Upon this account it is that *Sorrows* are ſo uſefull; that we are, upon the ſcore, to *rejoyce* when we meet with them: It being much better to *bear* them *well*, than to
Jam. 1. 2, 3. *meet* with *none* at all. *Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations: knowing this, that the trying of your*
Rom. 5. 3, 4. *Faith worketh Patience. We glory in Tribulations alſo; knowing that Tribula-*
1 Pet. 1. 6, 7. *tion worketh Patience. Wherein ye greatly rejoyce; though now for a ſeaſon (if need be) ye are in heavineſs, through manifold temptations: that the tryal of your Faith being much more precious than of Gold that periſheth, though it be tryed in the Fire, might be found unto Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt.* Tho' *we had* theſe *Graces*, yet without this Tryal, *we* might have been without the *Comfort*, and *God* without

out the *Glory*, and our *Brother* without the *advantage* of them.

Laſtly, Good men that have *ſuffered greatly* for a good Cauſe in this life, ſhall have a *Reward proportionable*. There are degrees of Glory in the other State; and they that have *done* and *ſuffered much*, ſhall hereafter be placed in the *higher* ſtations in *Glory*. *If ſo be that we ſuffer with him, we ſhall be glorified together.* We ſhall receive an ample and a full Reward. If we *bear the Croſs*, we ſhall *wear the Crown*: And the *heavier* our *Croſs*, and *greater* our *Patience*, the *greater* ſhall our *Glory* be. Nor will any of the bleſſed and holy Spirits have cauſe to murmur and complain. They will give all Glory and Praiſe to God; and think themſelves amply rewarded with *Glory* and *Immortality* for all their *Patience* under their *Sorrows* here. Rom. 8. 17.

4. I conſider that good men are *ſupported* under their Sorrows and Troubles here: And if *God enable* them to *endure*, well may he lay upon them *what* he pleaſes. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? ſhall Tribulation, or Diſtreſs, or Perſecution, or Famine, or Nakedneſs, or Peril, or Sword? Nay, in all theſe things we are more than Conquerours, through* Rom. 8. 35, 37.

through him that loved us. Well, ſo it is, the good man may be afflicted: he is not forſaken. *We are troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; we are perplexed, but not in deſpair; perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed.* *God* does *ſupport* his Servants; and they have no cauſe to *complain*, when their *Strength* holds *proportion* with their *Burden.* The pious man is well dealt with, when he is *rewarded hereafter*, and *enabled here:* And ſure 'tis as well for him to die at a *Stake*, or by a *Tyrant's Sword*, as a *Natural Death* (and ſomething *better* too) if *God give* him *ſtrength* to *bear* whatever is laid upon him.

2 Cor. 4. 8, 9.

III. I proceed now to make ſome *Uſe* of what has been ſaid.

1. This ſerves to refute thoſe *Epicureans*, that *deny* the Providence and Care of God; that ſay, *how does God know?* *Theſe* men, tho' they do not openly deny the *Being* of God, yet when they deny his *Providence* and *Care*, they open a wide Door to let in Profaneneſs; and do ſubvert the *need of ſerving* God, and *all Religion.* No wonder then that they give up themſelves to all manner of Licentiouſ-

Licentiousness, when they have imagined that God's Eye does not see them. But we see from what has been said, that God takes care of things below, and the least thing happens not without his knowledge and his leave. 'Tis said indeed among the *Ancients*, that the very Night that *Alexander* was born, the *Ephesian* Temple of *Diana* was destroyed by Fire: And that 'twas no wonder that so it should be, because *Diana* being at the Birth of *Alexander*, and assisting his Mother, was then absent from her own House. This Story is becoming a *false Deity*, not a *true God*. For *God* is *every where* present, he is never *far from any of us*, in his *Being* and his *Power*. *Heaven and Earth are full of his Majesty* and *Glory*: We think unworthily of him, if we think any thing *without* his *reach* and *above* his *power*, or *hid* from his *Eyes*. 'Tis to be feared, that he that *denys* his *Providence*, does it because he *breaks* his *Laws*: And because he *does things not fit* to be *seen*, he *denies* that *God sees* him; and removes out of his way the *great restraint* of his *Vice* and *Wickedness*; which is the *all-seeing Eye* of *God*. *They break in pieces thy People, O Lord, and afflict thine Heri-*

Cicero de Natur. Deorum, l. 2.

Ps. 139.

P. 945.—

tages. They slay the Widow, and the Stranger; and murder the Fatherless: yet they say, the Lord shall not see; neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. Men do easily believe with their Interest; and he that is guilty of many secret Wickednesses, is willing to believe that God did not see him. 'Tis his Interest it should be so, and no man is so forward to believe it as he.

2. It serves to *reprove* those that live as if there were no Providence of God at all: as if God did not see or take any care at all. There are very many are reprovable upon this score; those especially that do always torment themselves with thoughts of this Life. If *God* take a particular *care* of *good men*, what hast *thou* to *do*, but to take *care* of *well-doing*? For *all other* things the *care* is taken *already*. Certainly the words of the Text are *no Gospel*, or else 'tis to be feared we are *no Christians*. We *believe* them, or we do *not believe* them: If *not*, why do we *profess* this *belief*? If we *do*, why do we *disquiet* and *perplex* our selves? If we could live without *his* care, we might think *our selves* obliged to care for our selves; but if we cannot, what do we mean to disquiet our selves?

Will

Will we thrust our selves into *God's place*; and be so vile and vain to attempt *that*, which *God alone* can do? Tho' we cannot by our care *add a Cubit to our Stature*, yet we shall add much *Sorrow* to our *Days*, and *Guilt* to our *Consciences* also. It was not our Care that brought us *into being*; and all our Care will not *preserve* the *being* we have. *In him we live, and move, and have our being also.* And 'tis not the *Bread* we *labour for*, and *eat*, that *we live by*, *but every word that proceeds out of the Mouth of God.* When we have done all, 'tis *God's Blessing that makes us Rich, and adds no Sorrow to us.* Our Care may make us *miserable*; but it can never make us *happy.* For neither our *Life* nor *Happiness* consist in *abundance*, but in *God's Blessing*, and a *quiet* and *contented* Mind. *Godliness and Content are great gain.*

3. We have here a great *Motive* to a *Religious* and *Pious* Life. If God concern himself in the lower World, if he sees what we do, and takes a particular care of *good men*, we have great Incentives to *become such.* If *he hear* our *Prayers*, we have great cause to be *fervent* in them. If *he observe* our *Charity*, we have sufficient motive to *bestow* it. Here's a motive

tive for our *Faith* and *relyance* upon *God*, if *he careth for us*. If we be in *Wants* or under *Difficulties*, we see *whither* we must go for our relief. *Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth.* Did we live under a lively and constant sense of this Truth, we should find our selves greatly constrained to lead a *Life* of *Faith*; and not by our profligate Lives to forfeit this peculiar Care of God.

Let us then *abound in the work of the Lord*, and *our labour shall not be in vain.* Doubt not but *he that sees in secret, will reward thee openly.* As none of thy *labours of Love* is *unknown to God*, so the *gift of a Cup of cold Water* shall *not* go *unrewarded.*

4. and *Lastly*, This may serve much for the *quieting* of the *good man*, *under* the *Calamities* he *meets* with, and *against* Eccl. 5. 8. *those* he *fears*. *If thou seest the oppression of the Poor, and violent perverting of Judgment and Justice in a Province, marvel not at the matter; for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they.* We shall see things ill administred, meet with disappointments: but let this quiet us, that *God reigns.* Let us resolve our selves into this,

this, and be at reſt. There's no *Evil in the City* without *God's* Providence. Well then, I bury my Friend, or Child; I loſe my Goods, or fall into cruel Hands; but none of theſe things happen by *chance:* If *I love God*, they *all* make for my *good* too. There's *nothing* can make us *happy* but *God*; and *nothing miſerable*, but our *own Will.* Let us reſign up *our Wills* to *his*; and *whatever happens, nothing* ſhall *hurt* us. *God will never leave us, nor forſake us.* I ſhall *end all* with the *words* that *follow* thoſe of my *Text. Be ſober, be vigilant; because your Adverſary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour: Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the Faith; knowing that the ſame Afflictions are accompliſhed in your Brethren that are in the World. But the God of all Grace, who hath called us unto his Eternal Glory, by Chriſt Jeſus, after that ye have ſuffered a while, make you perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle you. To him be Glory and Dominion, for ever and ever.* Amen. 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9, 10, 11.

SERMON VI.

ACTS XVII. 28.

For in him we live, and move, and have our being.

IT is of great moment towards our Amendment, that we live under a constant and lively sense of our Relation *to God*, and our dependance upon him. If we place him at a distance from us, and do not consider that we live by his Bounty, and receive all our Mercies from his Hands we shall have but a slender regard to him: And tho' we may have a *form of Godliness*, yet we shall be void of the *power of it*. The men of *Athens* were *hospitable* to *Deities*; and wanted not an *Altar* dedicated *to the unknown God*. But they that were so *full* of *Deities* and *Altars*, were *void* of true *Piety* and *Godliness*. St. *Paul* preaches to them *the God* whom they did *not know*;

know, the great Creator and Preſerver of all the World; who *needs* not his *Creatures*, *ſeeing He giveth to all Life*, v. 25. *and Breath, and all things.* The whole Univerſe is *his* work; and 'twas *he* that planted the Earth and repleniſhed it with Inhabitants: and the ſeveral Nations of it, are but ſo many *Colonies* that God has ſent, and placed in their reſpective Habitations. 'Twas *he* that *made them all of one Blood*, and that has *ſet out their ſeveral Seaſons and Limits*; and that alſo, that they might *acknowledge him* who is their great Lord and Benefactor. v. 26, 27. God expects that they ſhould ſeek him, and find him: and *that* they might the more *eaſily* do, becauſe *he is not far from every one of us: For in him* ——.

The words are a diſtinct *Propoſition* of themſelves, and give us an account of *God's Providence* in *ſupporting* us, and of *our Dependance upon him* for *all* things, for *Life*, and *Motion*, and *Being*. I ſhall not be ſo nice as to make *Critical Remarks* upon any part of the words. They are plain and intelligible enough of themſelves. They give us an account, (1.) Of the great *Benefits* we enjoy, *Life*, and *Motion*, and *Being*. (2.) Of the *Fountain* of theſe Mercies: *In him*,

or *by him*: And for the better ſpeaking to theſe words, I ſhall

Firſt, Conſider the *Mercies* themſelves: *We live*, &c. Which I ſhall underſtand in the greateſt Latitude, as 'tis expreſſed, *v.* 25. *He giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all things.*

Secondly, I ſhall ſhew you *who* is the Author of all theſe good things which we enjoy. *In him* —

Thirdly, I ſhall conſider the *Uſe* which we ought to make of this.

I. I conſider the *Mercies* themſelves: *We live, and move, and have our being*: or as 'tis *V.* 25. *He giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all things.* Theſe are no *little* Benefits, nor are they *few*; for 'tis not only *Life* and *Breath* that we receive, but *all things* elſe. I ſhall ſpeak to them in their *order*.

Firſt, *Life*: *In him we live.* *Life* is and *has* always been *eſteemed*, a moſt *valuable* Bleſſing. Nay *Health*, which is but a *modus vitæ*, is *preferrable* to *Riches* and *Honour*. But *Life* it ſelf is valued *above all* worldly things: Every Creature that *has* it, ſtrives to *continue* and *preſerve* it with the greateſt expence.

All

All that a man has will he give for his Life. To him that is joined to all the living, there is hope; For a living Dog is better than a dead Lion. Eccl. 9. 4. The pooreſt *Peaſant* that *lives*, would not change his condition with the greateſt *Monarch* that is placed among the *Dead*. *Life* is more than *Dominion* and *Empire*: And the *pooreſt* man that *lives*, has in his *Life* a *Treaſure* that he values above all the *Riches* of the *Indies*.

A *living Creature* is placed in an higher rank of Beings than thoſe that are *inanimate*: And tho' there are among them many *excellent* and *uſefull* ones, yet they are ſo *to them* that *enjoy Life*: 'Tis *our Life* that makes us capable of reaping the *benefit* of them. To them that *want Life* the Sun ſhines not, nor do the Moon and Stars give light. They receive not the pleaſure of the faireſt Proſpect, nor are they entertain'd by the moſt raviſhing and harmonious Sounds: *Neither have they any more portion for ever, in any thing that is done under the Sun.* Eccl. 9. 6.

Beſides, our *Life* is conjoined with *Hope*: But the *Dead* are always *bereft* of *that*. Our *Hope* and *Breath* leave us *together*. *That* is a Companion of *Life* only.

only: When we *die*, 'tis either swallowed up in *Fruition* or *drowned* in *Despair*. Our condition may be *pitiable here*; but *then* 'tis *desperate*. We *meet* with *Evils*; but yet we justly *hope* for *better* things: And when we meet with the *Sorrows* of *this*, we then hope for the *Joys* of a *better life*. The *living man* knows the *viciſſitude* of humane Affairs; and may hope the *Wheel* will *turn*. *But*
Eccl. 9. 5. *the Dead know not any thing; neither have they any more a Reward; for the Memory of them is forgotten.*

In a word, our *Life* is more valuable than any thing we enjoy: 'Tis to us more dear and precious. He that hath it, *hath more* than he *wants*. And there are many would think themſelves happy had they their *Life given them for a*
Lam. 3. 39. *Prey. Wherefore does a living man complain?* What will a man take for his Life? Who thinks that there's any thing under the Sun price great enough for it? The very thoughts of *Death* chill us: And *not to live*, we judge near of kin to *not being* at all. Alas! what does a Stone or Clod of Earth enjoy? 'Tis *Life* that makes us better than Stocks and Stones, that does replenish us with *Joy* and *Hope*. That we are alive this day is a Mercy

that

that is unſpeakable: And tho' we are ſo ſtupid and ſo brutiſh as not to conſider it, yet 'tis enough to quell our Mutinies and Complaints.

Let's but ſuppoſe (and we may all do it) that we ſhould all die the next moment: Let's ſeriouſly put the Caſe to our Souls, think thou wert now drawing thy laſt Breath: What wouldſt thou give for a few Years to come? What wouldſt thou think too much to pay to renew thy Leaſe of Life? Put the Caſe home, and thou wilt find thy ſelf ſetting a great rate upon this Mortal Life: Thou wouldſt give all thou haſt to retrieve thoſe precious Hours, which now thou ſpendeſt in doing nothing, or in doing amiſs. And why ſhould we not prize it *now* while we *enjoy* it, as well as *then* when 'tis *flying* from us? 'Tis *now as valuable*, though we do *not value* it. 'Twill ſerve to *great* purpoſes *now*, tho' we uſe it to *trifling* ones.

Indeed, if we have *lived well*, *Death* will not be very *formidable*; nor ſhall we be ſo *fond* of *this Life*. But then ſtill, this *Life* is a *great Bleſſing*, whether we have lived *well*, or *ill*. If we have *lived well*, yet this gave us the *opportunity* of doing it; 'twas the Stage on which

which we *acted* our parts *well*. If we have lived *amiss* this Life muſt needs be *valuable*, as it *continues* the *ſpace of Repentance*, and the *poſſibilities* of a *future Glory*.

Let us but conſider it aright, we ſhall find it a moſt *unſpeakable Bleſſing* that we *live*. 'Tis ſo to *all* ſorts of men; and the time is coming when the *dying Sinner* will ſet a *price* upon that which he *now deſpiſes*. Then he will in vain call back his miſpent Hours, and *wiſh for* that time which now he *throws away*.

Secondly, *Motion*. How great a Mercy this is, we do not commonly conſider. And yet our *Life* without it were very uncomfortable. Suppoſe we were *faſtened* to the *Earth*, like *Trees*; that we were either *ſtaked down*, or elſe wanted *Power* or *Inſtruments* of *Motion*: Suppoſe man had been made with one Leg, or with none at all; what uſeleſs and unprofitable Creatures ſhould we have been to our ſelves and to others! Commerce would not have been, nor Converſation among men, we could not have run *from* our *own danger*, nor *to the ſuccour of our Neighbour*. But now we are able to help our *ſelves* and *others*; by this Power we *defend* our *ſelves*, and *provide*

provide for our *needs*. Nor do we move as Clocks and Watches do by *a mechanick motion*, nor yet as *Stones* move upwards by *force and violence*, nor as the Sun and Moon by a *conſtant Law* of our Nature, but we move *ſpontaneouſly* and of *choice*, as we *pleaſe* and as we *judge convenient*: And we are ſo framed with ſuch Parts, ſuch Muſcles, ſuch Nerves; and thoſe of ſuch a Figuration, and fit Contexture, that we perform the Offices we need, with *eaſe* and *at pleaſure*: And by that means we *ſerve our needs*, and *help one another*.

And let any man conſider it aright and he will find this *no little benefit*. For to *what* purpoſe could he have ſerved, had he been as immoveable as a Rock or Tree? Or let him but look upon the *Bed-ridden*, and the *Paralytick*, that have loſt the power of motion, and he will find cauſe to acknowledge he enjoys no little Mercy when he enjoys the uſe of his Limbs.

We *know* the *benefit* of this, when we come to *want* it. When we are maim'd or bereft, wounded or diſabled, then we ſee we enjoyed much *before*. The Mercy was *as great before* as 'tis *now*: but we *regarded* it *not*. However, 'twill be well

well for us ſometime to take a turn in an *Hoſpital*, to look in on *Cripples* and *Bed-ridden* men, upon the Decrepid and Bereft: And let us then ſuppoſe ſome of thoſe men reſtored to their Strength and Powers. With what joy may we imagine the *Paralytick* and *Infirm* received their perfect cure from our *Saviour* and his *Apoſtles*! 'Tis ſaid of the *lame man* that was reſtored; That he
Acts 3. 8. *leaping up, ſtood, and walked, and entred with them into the Temple, walking, and leaping, and praiſing God.* And no wonder he ſhould do all this. But then we are as much *indebted* to the *Divine Mercy* that *keeps* us *ſound*, as *he* that was *miraculouſly* made *whole*: For ſure 'tis as great a Mercy to be *preſerved* from *Danger*, as *delivered* out of it: And *he* does me as *great* a *kindneſs*, that *keeps* me *from falling*, as *he* that *helps me up*. And tho' we are not ſo *ſenſible* of it, he that *never came into* the Difficulty, enjoys as *great a benefit*, as he that is *reſcued from* it. *My Neighbour* falls from his Horſe; and by a ſtrange Providence he is preſerved from Death or Lameneſs, or is reſtored: But then I am indebted as much, that did not fall at all. He that makes a *Clock* or *Watch* that *goes true*,

true, does as much, ſure, as he that *mends* it when it goes *amiſs*.

Well, ſo it is: we are ſtrangely made, and there is no Clock or Watch, or any *other* piece of *Mechaniciſm* that is *fuller* of Springs, of Wheels and Wards, than *man's Body* is of Nerves and Muſcles, Cartilages, Fibres, and Veſſels; and other Inſtruments ſerving to Motion, and to the diſcharge of the ſeveral Offices and Functions of the Body. Theſe things are curiouſly wrought, framed by an infinite and adorable Wiſdom. And that they be ſet right and continue firm is of great moment. Should one of them be defective, or faulty, who could expreſs the Troubles and Miſeries that would enſue! How many Diſeaſes, Pains, and Difficulties would enſue upon ſuch defect? 'Tis no little Mercy, then, that we have our ſeveral Powers, and can diſcharge our Functions: Whether we *are* ſenſible of theſe things, or no, we have great *reaſon* ſo *to be*; when 'tis evident that *one diſorder* would make our *Lives miſerable*; and the *irregular* motion of the *Inteſtines* only brings ſo *great Evils* with it.

Thirdly, *Our Being*. *Our Being* is another Mercy, and of a *diſtinct* and *ſe-*

parate

parate Consideration. That we *are* is a Mercy to us, and since the time was when *we were not*, it must needs be an act of free Grace and Mercy that *sent* us *into Being*. We had been nothing still, had not the undeserved Bounty of Heaven given us a Being. For when we were not, nothing but God's free Mercy could move him to make us: For that which was nothing, could not contribute any thing towards its existence.

And sure our very *Beings* are Bounty and Favour: 'Tis the Emanation of the Divine Goodness. This is the *Foundation* of our *Happiness*; which could *never* have *been*, *had* not *this Foundation* been *first laid*: And Being is *necessary* and *essential* to *none* but *God*. All our *other* Capacities and Perfections are but the *Superstructure* upon *this Ground-work*. Had not *this* been *first laid*, there had been no room for *Life*, and *Breath*, and *Motion*. Our *Enjoyments* and our *Hopes* are but the *Off-spring* of this *Mercy*: And if to be *annihilated* be an *Evil* and a *Curse*; *to be* must be a *Blessing* that is *proportionable*: And if to be *raised* to an *higher estate* and *degree*, be always esteemed a *Favour*, *what* must it be to be brought out of *nothing* into *something*?

We

We call those the *Creatures* of *Princes*, who are *raised by them* to *Dignities*; but sure the Favour is *greater*, by far, to be brought *from nothing*: And that we *are* so, is as much a *greater* Favour, as it is *more* to be raised *from nothing to Being*, than *from a small* and *low condition* to that which is *higher*. Between *high* and *low*, *little* and *great* there's *some* proportion: but *none* at all between *that which is not*, and *that which is*. Our very *Being*, then, is a *Mercy*, and a *great* one too; if we consider that we were raised to it *from nothing*, and that 'tis the *Foundation* of all the *rest* of our *Perfections* and *Capacities*.

But we must understand this in the *largest sense*; *He gives us Life, and Breath, and all things*: Now *that* does import, not our *Being alone*, but all the comfortable *Appendages* of it, some of which (*viz.* Life and Motion) were named before: And if *being* is a *Mercy*, the being *what* we *are*, is a *double* one.

Now there are a great many things besides strict *Being* that fall under this Consideration, and were not named before. That we *live* and *move* is a great advantage; but the *Beasts* do *this also*. That we have *a Being* is a Favour; but

every *Mite* and *Fly* has *that* as well as *we*; ſo has every *Mote* and *Atom*, the *leaſt* and moſt *inſignificant* Creatures. *They are*; but *not what we* are. For

That we are *men* is a great *acceſſion* to our *Beings*. We do not *creep* and *crawl* upon the Earth, as *Worms*, and *other* Creatures do; *Os homini ſublime dedit* — we are built up into an *erect* Frame, raiſed *above* the *Earth*, and the *reptils* of it. 'Tis a wonderfull Providence that does appear in our *outward ſhape*: We are framed ſo, that it may appear from our very *Bodies*, we were made for *greater* Purpoſes than *other* Creatures. *Man* is a *Fabrick*, and a *curious* one too; he is *built high*; and with an *unparallel'd* Wiſdom and Care.

Pſal. 139. 14— *I will praiſe thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvellous are thy Works, and that my Soul knoweth right well. My Subſtance was not hid from thee, when I was made in ſecret, and curiouſly wrought in the loweſt parts of the Earth. Thine Eyes did ſee my Subſtance, yet being unperfect; and in thy Book all my Members were written; which in continuance were faſhioned, when as yet there was none of them: How precious alſo are thy Thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the*

the ſumm of them! The *Pieces of Art* are nothing to this *ſtupendious Work* of *God.*

But then our *Souls*, *Mind*, and *Underſtanding*, denominate us *Men.* And *herein* lies the *Perfection* of *our Nature*; *this* makes us *taller* by the Head and Shoulders than the *reſt* of God's Creatures. We have *precious* and *immortal Souls*, of *greater price* and *value* than all the *Riches* of the lower World. We have a Being that will *continue* when the *Heavens* ſhall be *melted down*, and the *Frame* of the *Earth* ſhall be *diſſolved. Other* Creatures *die*, and be *no more*; but man ſhall *live for ever.* We are made with *large Capacities*; ſo *large* and *wide*, that the *World* will *not fill* them. We are *capable* of *knowing God*, and being *happy* with *him*, for *ever.* We were made for *great purpoſes*, and are *receptive* of *Glories*, that *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor* can the *Heart of man* conceive: *Glories* that do as much ſurpaſs what *this World* can ſhew, as the *Heavens* do this lower lump of *Earth.*

To all this I add, that ſo it is, that tho' we meet with many *Sorrows* in *this World*, yet we ſtand fair for the *Glories* of the *next*: which is a *Mercy* that is

unſpeakable. Nothing will *exclude* us *Heaven*, but our wilfull *Obſtinacy* and *Unbelief:* We ſhall *live* in *Glory* unleſs we reſolve to *ruine our ſelves* in becoming *Beaſts* or *Devils.* For *God* has *done his* part: if we periſh, 'tis becauſe we *neglect ours.* And 'tis *much* that God has done: 'Tis *very much* we do enjoy in order to a *future ſtate* of *Bliſs* and *Immortality.*

We were born of *Chriſtian Parents*, and in *Chriſtian Countries*, and were *betimes devoted* to the *Religion* of *our Lord:* This gives us the advantage above *Turks* and *Paynims*, *Jews* and *Infidels:* And a Mercy 'tis, that could not be of *our contriving*, and which we can never be *thankfull enough for.* This gives us a great *riſe*; but we enjoy *more* than this: That we were not born in the *Communion* of the *Church of Rome*, I think an invaluable Bleſſing: where tho' we ſhould *grant*, *Salvation may be had*, yet 'tis a *Peradventure* but *we* ſhould have *miſſed* it. There are *ſome* have *got* to *Shore* upon the *Planks* of a *broken Veſſel*, but yet there are *more* have been *drowned* in the *Shipwrack.* *We* have the *advantage*, that are in a *ſound* Veſſel, whatever *Storms* or *Tempeſts* come.

But

But all this is but *part* of what we enjoy. For beſides this, are many things that give us great *hopes* of *Bliſs* and *Immortality*. God has given his *Son*, promiſed his *Spirit*, ſent his *Meſſengers*, made known his *Will*, invited us by the greateſt *Motives*, ſet before us *Life* and *Death*, *ſpared* us and given us *time to Repent*, and ſtill *moves* us to *turn* and *live*.

I might after all this put you in mind of many Mercies you enjoy that concern *this Life*, which are comfortable *Appendages* of your *Being*. And how many of theſe Favours may you not find? Your Health, Strength, Liberty; the Life of your Wives, Children, Friends, and Relatives; that you have Meat and Appetite; Cloathing and Ornaments; Neceſſaries, and ſome ſurpluſage; Houſes of your own, when many are in Priſons and Gallies, and your Neighbours lie in Aſhes. That you are not under the Torture of the Gout and Stone, under the Flames of Calentures, nor ſurpriz'd with Palſies or Apoplexies: That you do not live under the noiſe of Warlike Inſtruments, nor in the midſt of Blood and Maſſacres: That you enjoy your Religion in Peace, without fear of Fag-

get and Fire: These are great Dignations indeed, Favours and Bleſſings, comfortable attendants upon our *Beings*. The time would fail, if I ſhould reckon up all that might be ſaid; and when I attempt it, I will at the ſame time tell you the number of the Stars, and of the Sands of the Sea-ſhore. I ſhall conclude this Particular with the *Pſalmiſt*'s words. *Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderfull Works, which thou haſt done, and thy Thoughts which are to us ward: They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: If I ſhould declare and ſpeak of them, they are more than can be numbred.*

Pſ. 40. 5.

I have laid before you the *Mercies* themſelves: They are ſure very *great* ones. *We live, move, and have our Beings; Life, and Breath, and all things:* I proceed.

II. I ſhall ſhew you who is the *Author* of all theſe Mercies which we enjoy; *In him — Deus nobis hæc otia fecit. God has done* all theſe *great things for us. That God*, that *is not far from us*, whoſe *Offſpring* we are; 'tis *he* that *gives us Life, and Breath, and all things. In him*——

I ſhall

I ſhall not need be operoſe in *proving* this to you. It is a Truth that is very *evident* and *plain*. And tho' *we live not* as if this *were* true, yet we generally *profeſs* the *belief* of it: And for the *proof* of this I offer the following *Severals*.

1. The very *notion* of a *Deity* teaches us this. We cannot *conceive* of a *Deity*, but we muſt think of the *only neceſſary* and *independant* Being: And if we judge ſo of any thing *elſe*, we make a *God* of *that*. *God is*; and *as he is*, *there's none beſides him*. *He only* hath *Immortality*. Our *Souls are immortal*: *He is ſo from himſelf*; and therefore *we from him*. *All* the *Creatures* muſt *hang* and *depend* upon *him*, if *he be* the *firſt*, and an *independant* Being: And *if he be not*, he is *not God*. We doubt not but the *Stream* depends upon the *Fountain*, the *Beams* of *Light* upon the *Sun*, and the *Branches* on the *Root*: And as little reaſon have we to doubt of *our* dependance upon *him for Life*, *and Breath*, *and all things*. *All* muſt depend upon the *firſt* and *greateſt Being*: It muſt be *that* alone that *gives a Being* to and that *ſuſtains* all *other* things.

If *God* be from *himſelf*, we muſt be *from him*; and if our *Being* be from *him*

ſo muſt our *Life* and *Motion* alſo: And then we may as well ſuppoſe a *Clock* will go without *Art* and *Care*, without *Weight* and *Pullies*, as that *we* can *move* or *breath* without *God*. For as the Iron and Braſs of ſuch an Inſtrument is ſluggiſh and unactive, and could not ſtir without Force and man's Contrivance, as little could we without God: And we may as well ſuppoſe we could *be* without God, as we can *live* and *move* without him. He that is the *firſt* and the *neceſſary Being*, muſt needs be *God*, and be the *cauſe* of *all other* Beings: and if ſo, he muſt be the *cauſe* of *all* their *Perfections* and *Operations* alſo.

2. Our own *Experience* teaches us the ſame. If we *believe not this*, 'tis becauſe we are *ignorant* of *God* and of *our ſelves*. We may eaſily *perceive* our *Dependance*, if *we will*: For we know *our Power* is *limited*; and there are *more* things *we cannot*, than *we can do*. And for thoſe things which we *think in our power*, we find our ſelves *defeated*, and at a *loſs*, frequently. By this we may learn that *our Power* is *limited*: and *he* that has *ſtinted* us, has alſo *given* us *what we have*. 'Tis certain *our Power* bears no proportion to *our Will*; and then 'tis evident,

evident, that we must needs *depend* upon him for *all*, who has *given us some*. We cannot *move without God* at all; and this from hence *appears*, that *the Power* we have is *circumscribed*.

3. There's nothing plainer from the *Divine Revelation*: *That* tells us, that God made us, that *in him we live*, &c. That *he gives us Life, and Breath*, &c. That *we are not sufficient, without him, to think a good thought*. That *every good and perfect gift is from him*. *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things. To us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him*. We are taught hence, that we have *nothing but what we have received*; and that *God alone makes us to differ*. *If we live*, 'tis *God* that *gave* us this *life*: *He breathed into man the breath of life*. *Whatever* we *have*, we are hence taught *to whom* to impute it; not to *our own Wisdom, Power*, or *Strength*, (for without God we are nothing) but to *God alone*, *who gives us Life, and Breath, and all things*: I proceed

Rom. 11. 35, 36.

1 Cor. 8. 6.

III. To

III. To consider the *Use* which we ought to make of what has been said.

1. This may serve to reprove our *Pride*, and foolish *boasting* our selves of what we *are* or do *enjoy*. Did we live under a lively sense of *this Truth*, one would think 'twere impossible we should be guilty of a *proud* Thought. *Are we* better than *others*? but *who* has *made* us so? We are the *more indebted* to the *Divine Bounty*: and in the mean while, we shall do well to remember, that he that has *received much*, hath a *great account* to give. We have *nothing* so truly *ours*, as *our Sins*: and we are monstrously *depraved*, if we *pride* our selves in *our Shame*: And no man can be *proud*, but it must be of his *Follies*, or his *Debts*. I have often thought it a very *hard* thing to be *proud*: and so sure it is for him that *considers*, and *dwells much* at *home*. For that man will find great *matter* of *Praise*, and enough to *humble him*; but *nothing* to make him *proud*. And without doubt, if we be assaulted this way greatly, 'tis because we have but a slender sense about us of the Truth contained in the words of my Text: and we do at once *forget* our dependance upon

upon *God*, and *cheat* our *ſelves*. *For if a man think himſelf to be ſomething, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf.* Gal. 6. 3.
What is it that makes us *ſwell*? Is it our *ancient Blood*? *God hath made of one Blood all Nations of men.* v. 20.
Is it our *Dignity* and *Authority* over others? *He* that *calls* ſuch men *Gods*, tells them, at the ſame time, *They ſhall die like men! His Breath goeth forth, he returneth to his Earth; in that very day his thoughts periſh.* Pſ. 146. 4.
Does our *Proſperity* puff us up? You know who ſays, *Verily every man at his beſt eſtate is altogether Vanity.* Pſal. 39.
Is it our *Wit* and *Knowledge*? this it is perhaps that ſwells us: But alas vain man, wilt thou be *proud* of a *little* of *that*, which the *Devils* have in a *greater* degree? *What* is there then that can puff thee *up*? *What* can *he* be proud of whoſe *very Being* is *dependant* and *precarious*? If *God withdraw*, or *ſpeak the word*, thou wilt *not be*, or wilt *be miſerable*. *When thou with rebukes doſt correct man for Iniquity, thou makeſt his Beauty to conſume away like a Moth.* Pſ. 39. 11.

2. This may alſo ſerve for the Reproof of the Profane Sinners, that live in a contradiction to the Divine Precepts and Will; that live to *his Diſhonour* by *whoſe Bounty*

Bounty they live; that receive *all* from *him*, and make him *no Acknowledgments* at all. Greater *ingratitude* there cannot be: And that which we ſhould deteſt among each other. Deut. 32. 6. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh people and unwiſe? Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee and eſtabliſhed thee?* Do we receive all from God, and yet do we ſet our Mouth againſt the Heavens? does he give us Life and Breath, Health and Strength, and do we lay it out upon our Luſts and in the Devil's Service? Iſa. 1. 2. *Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth, for the Lord hath ſpoken: I have nouriſhed and brought up Children, and they have rebelled againſt me.* Do we thus requite the Almighty? A *Son* honoureth his *Father*, and a *Servant* his *Maſter*. Mal. 1. 6. *If I then be a Father, where is my Honour? and if I be Maſter, where is my Fear?* Do we ſerve him *negligently*, and with that which *coſts us nothing!* v. 8. *If ye offer the blind for a Sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and ſick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy Governour, will he be pleaſed with thee, or accept thy perſon? ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.* Does *God give us Life*, &c. and do we put him off with

cold

cold and *drowſie Prayers?* with *ſleepy Service*, or with *none* at all? Do we contemn the Author of our Beings and of all our Comforts; and account it a toil to ſerve him, who gives us all things liberally to enjoy? What abhorred Ingratitude is this! Shall not God be angry with ſuch a People! Certainly we are ſelf-condemned if we do but reflect; and ſhall be aſhamed if we do but conſider. However, know this, that when thou goeſt from God thou departeſt from thy Life, and forſakeſt thy own Mercies. Thou doſt but bring a Curſe upon thy own Head: *Curſed be the Deceiver, which hath in his Flock a Male; and voweth and ſacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing.* v. 14.

3. This may ſerve to excite us to *acknowledge God* in all our ways.

And *firſt*, As the firſt *Cauſe* and *Original* of all we are and have: For ſo we ſee he is. *In him we live*, &c. We uſe *Food* and *Phyſick*; but 'tis *he* that gives *Life* and *Health*. *Man does not live by Bread alone.* We *plant and water*; but *'tis God gives the increaſe.* Let's readily *acknowledge* this at all times; and then, tho' we *uſe the means*, we ſhall *depend upon God* alone; and if we do ſo, all things will ſucceed better with us. And

And then, *Secondly*, we have reaſon to make *him* the *laſt End alſo*, and *refer all* to *him*, as we *received all from him*. 'Tis but juſt, that if we believe *him* the *firſt cauſe*, we ſhould make *him* the *laſt alſo*. This was the fault of the *Gentiles*,
Rom. 1. 21. *when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankfull.* And in *us* this will be a *greater fault* than *in them*; becauſe we know him better. *They* knew him by his *Works*; and ſo do *we*, and by his *Word* too. *They* were taught ſomething of him by *his Creatures*; *we* by his *Son*.

4. and *Laſtly*, We may hence be ſtirred up to the *love of God*. A *Duty* which *theſe words* ſufficiently *recommend* to us, and one would think we ſhould *need no motive* to it: But ſo it is our *Hearts* are *frozen* and *hardned* by the *World*, and by our *Sins*; and we are very *void* of the *Divine Love*. And tho' we ſpeak him fair, and collogue with Heaven, yet 'tis too plain that the *love of God is not in us*.

SER-

SERMON VII.

PROV. XXX. 7, 8, 9.

Two things have I required of thee, deny me them not before I die. Remove far from me Vanity and Lyes: Give me neither Poverty nor Riches; feed me with Food convenient for me. Leſt I be full and deny thee, and ſay, who is the Lord: Or leſt I be poor and ſteal, and take the Name of my God in vain.

WHO it is that ſpeaks *theſe words*, and makes this Requeſt is a matter of ſome *queſtion* and *doubt*; and not ſo eaſie to determine.

They are *found*, indeed, in *that Book*, which is called the *Proverbs* of *Solomon*, Chap. 1. V. 1. And thus far *Solomon* may be

be preſumed to be the Author of them. 'Tis true, indeed, they are ſaid to be the words of *Agur*, the Son of *Jakeh*: But certain it is, that King *Solomon* enjoyed *other* names, beſides that of *Solomon*, in the *Sacred Writ*. For *beſides* that when he was *firſt* born, he that had received the name of *Solomon*, was (and that not without the direction of the Prophet *Nathan*) called *Jedidiah*, *becauſe of the Lord*: Beſides this, he is called קהלת, the *Preacher*: Which Appellation may poſſibly have ſome reference to this: For as that Expreſſion is thought to import as much as *Collector*, ſo it is certain, that the *Hebr.* אזר ſignifies *to Collect*: And therefore the *vulgar Latin* render *Agur* and *Jakeh* not as *proper names*, but *appellatively*, by *Congregantis* and *Vomentis*, as importing one that collected and made publick theſe excellent words. And to this Senſe *R. Solomon* interprets the words, and gives it in as the Interpretation of their Wiſe Men. And to the ſame Senſe St. *Hierom* does likewiſe interpret them (or *whoever* it be, that is the *Author* of thoſe *Comments* on the *Proverbs*, that go under *his name*) telling us that theſe are the *words* of *Solomon*; who for the ſame reaſon

ch. 30. 1.

V. Midras in Cantic. Fol. 4.

2 Sam. 12. 24, 25.

Eccl. 1. 1.

V. Verſ. Arab. in loc.

V. Raſhi in locum.

Hierem in Prov. 30. 1.

V. Ralbag. in locum ad eundum ſenſum.

reaſon that he is in *Greek* called Ἐκκλησιαζής, is called *Congregans* here; importing one and the ſelf ſame thing. So that he is but inſtead of *Coheleth* called *Agur*. *V. Hieronym. in Eccleſ.* 2. 1.

Others are of Opinion, that *Agur* is the name of ſome *other* man, and that he lived in or *before* the times of *Solomon*; who does here give us an account of his *wiſe Sayings*: And then *Solomon* did by *his Sayings*, as the Men of *Hezekiah* did by ſome of his *Proverbs*; who are ſaid to have *copied them out*. ch. 25. 1. *V. Aben Ezra in locum ut & Mercer. Jun. & Tremell.*

But we are more concern'd in the *Contents* of the Words, than to know *who* ſpake them. 'Tis enough that they are words of *Divine Authority*; *whoever* the *Penman* were. God grant they may be *inſtructive* to us; and then 'twill not be any loſs to us at all, tho' we ſhould be *ignorant* of the *Author* of them. And therefore leaving *that Inquiry*, I ſhall betake my ſelf to the *Words themſelves*.

We have in the *Words*, *Agur*'s *Requeſt*; and that is *twofold*. And then we have the *Reaſon* of his *Second* Requeſt. v. 7, 8. v. 9.

The *Requeſt* is *twofold*. (1.) For his *Inward man*, *Remove far from me*—— (2.) For his *Outward man*, *Give me*——

Before I come to the *main design* in my choice of these words, I shall make some *Observations*, as I go along, that are more *general*.

First, That he *conjoyns* the Care of his *Soul*, with that of his *Body*; he not only prays *for convenient Food*, but *against Vanity and Lyes*. We are *forward* enough to *pray for* these *outward things*; *after* which even *the Gentiles did seek*. Mat. 6. 32. The *Heathens*, when they *wanted Rain*, were wont to *pray to* Jupiter. They prayed for Riches and prosperous Successes——

——*O si*
Ebullit patrui præclarum funus! & o si
Sub rastro crepet argenti mihi seria dextro
Hercule.

This they were forward to do; they *prayed* for these things for themselves and their Children, and were very *earnest suitors* for them also. But *Agur* conjoins the care of his *Soul* with that of his *Body*. Thus are we directed by our *Lord*, to *pray*, not only for our *daily Bread*, but for the *pardon of our Sins*. And sure we are very *profane*, when we seek for *Pottage*, and despise the *Birthright*;

right; when we *remember our Bodies*, and *forget* our *immortal Souls*: These *two* must be *joined together*, in our *Devotions* and in *our Care*.

Secondly, That he *prefers* the concern of his *Soul* before that of his *Outward-man*. *Remove far from me*— this is his *first Request*; and then it follows, *Feed me*— This *order* we ought to observe; and 'tis of our *Lord's* appointment. Thus in *that Prayer* which our *Lord* has prescribed, we are first taught to pray for spiritual things, and then for temporal. And our Lord bids us, *Seek first the Kingdom of God— Labour not for the Meat that perisheth, but for that Meat which endureth unto everlasting life. This* is the *Order* which *Agur observes*, and which *God approves*, and *all good* Men will *imitate* and *follow*. Our *Religion* ought to be our *first* and *principal* Care: Nor shall we be *acceptable* to *God* till we *prefer him* and *his service* above *all* things else. The *Psalmist* makes *sundry requests* to God; but the *principal* was that he might *enjoy God*. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire*

Mat. 6. 33. Joh. 6. 27. Pf. 27. 4.

quire in his Temple. We are ſhort of what is indiſpenſably required of us, if our *firſt* and *greateſt* care be not about the *concern* of our *Souls*, and the *worſhip* of *God*. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I deſire beſides thee.* If we be not arrived to this *pitch*, our Religion is *ſhort*; and tho' it may ſerve our *worldly* Purpoſes, *i. e.* it may ſave our *Credit*, or our *Eſtates*, will *never ſave* our *Souls*. If we *love God* as we *ſhould*, we *love him above all* things. He that *prefers* any thing before *God's Favour*, his *Religion* is but *vain: He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me.*—— 'Twere well we would not *invert* this *order:* that we would *firſt* ſecure our *Souls* Intereſt, and then ſeek after our *other* concerns. But alas! we *invert* the *good man's order. Quærenda pecunia primum; virtus poſt nummos.* Our *Religion* is *not* our *firſt* and *principal* work; we have our *other* concerns that take the place.

Pſ. 73. 25.

Matt. 10. 37. with Luc. 14. 26.

Thirdly, That the *care* he has of his *outward eſtate*, and the *requeſt* he makes upon *that* account, is but in order to the welfare of his *inward man.* And we may learn from hence how to *regulate* our

our *desires* of *temporal* things. We never are *safer*, than when we desire them with *submission* to *God's* Will, and in *order* to our *spiritual good* and *welfare*. He deprecates *Riches* and *Poverty*; but let us observe upon *what score* he does it. For *Riches*, he *might* be afraid of them, and consequently beg that they might not be his lot, *because* they are attended with *Cares*, and with *Envy*, they do but *load* and *burden* us, *perplex* and *distract* us; we can enjoy no more than a man that has less; and then all the rest is cumbersom. But 'tis not upon *these* accounts he deprecates Riches, but *in order to* his *great concern*. *Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?* And then again he deprecates Poverty; and he might well do so; but let's observe why he does it. Poverty makes men ridiculous, and contemptible; they that are poor are trampled on and oppressed; they are without notice in the World: The *poor* man is out-voted; and let him be never so wise, his Wisdom is not hearkened to and regarded. But 'tis not upon *these* accounts he deprecates *Poverty*, but upon a more *generous* and *worthy* account, *Lest I be poor and steal, and take the*

name of my God in vain. Riches might occaſion him to forget or deny God, Poverty would tempt him to forſake him. Therefore he prays, *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches.* So that upon a *good account* he *deprecates* them *both.* And herein he has ſet *us* a *pattern*; and 'tis very *inſtructive* alſo. Let us ſo mind *earthly* that we be not deprived of *heavenly* things: And ſeek for *things Temporal*, but in *order to things that are Eternal.* Our *outward* concerns muſt miniſter to our *inward*; and *then* only, are things *well* with us in *this* World, when they do *not hinder* the *concerns* of the *next.*

Fourthly, That he addreſſes himſelf to *God* for *both* theſe; for his *Food* as well as for the *removal* of *Vanity* and *Lyes.* And *this* is alſo *very inſtructive.*

Matt. 4. *Man does not live by Bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the Mouth of God.* We take a *wrong* courſe when we put our *affiance* in any *other* but *God*; even in our worldly and ſecular Affairs. 'Tis not our Skill or Diligence, our Care and Craft can help us. 'Tis *God* alone that we are to reſt and

Pſal. 127. 1, 2. relie upon. *Except the Lord build the Houſe they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the City, the Watch-*

man

man waketh but in vain. It is in vain for you to riſe up early, to ſit up late, to eat the Bread of Sorrows; for ſo he giveth his beloved Sleep.

I proceed now to the *Requeſt*; and, *Firſt*, to *that part* of it which concerns the *inward* man.

Remove far from me Vanity and Lyes. And here I ſhall, *firſt*, give you the *importance* of this Requeſt; and *ſecondly*, ſhall ſhew you how it ſerves for our *Inſtruction*. Now the following *Severals* will give us the *Importance* of this Requeſt.

1. As he prays againſt all manner of *Guile*, ſo even againſt a *Mind* to *deceive*, or *diſſemble*. And then he prays for *ſincerity in the inward parts*. And this he may well be preſumed to do, when he prays to God to *remove* theſe things *far from him*. 'Tis, then, great *ſimplicity of Heart* that he prays for; that he may *be really that*, which he *pretends* to be.

2. Conſequently, that he may be preſerved from *evil ſpeaking*, from the *Faults and Follies* of the *Tongue*, from *falſe Words* and *falſe Actions*. For שוא Deut. 5. 20. ſignifies *falſe*: and 'tis joined here with רכר כוב *Lyes*. *They ſpeak Vanity every*

Pſ. 12. 2. *one with his Neighbour:* And then it follows, *with flattering Lips, and with a*
Pſ. 26. 4. *double Heart do they ſpeak.* Again, *I have not ſat with vain perſons: neither will I go in with Diſſemblers.* And then he may be preſumed to pray againſt the ſins of *Lying, bearing Falſe-witneſs,* of *ſlandering* and *fraudulent betraying of Truſt.* And not only *ſo,* but againſt the *ſins* of *Flattery and Diſſimulation;* ſins that are ſo *common* and yet but *little conſidered.* For 'tis not only an *evil* to *deceive* our Brother by *direct breach* of *Faith,* but 'tis a great *ſin* to *flatter* and *ſooth* him up in his *ſins,* when we ought to *reprove* and *rebuke.* 'Tis great Inſincerity to *pretend* Friendſhip where we are *void* of it; and to make a *ſhew* of kindneſs where we want it; ſo that all theſe things he prays againſt, *Lying, bearing Falſe-witneſs,* all *inſincere* Carriages and Profeſſions. Theſe are *foul ſins,* and very *fruitful ones* alſo: they are *great Evils,* and the *parents* of *great ones* too.
Pſal. 144. 7, 8. The *Pſalmiſt* prays to be *delivered from the hand of ſtrange Children: whoſe Mouth ſpeaketh Vanity, and their right-hand is a right-hand of Falſhood.* And if *he pray* to be delivered from *ſuch men,* well may we believe that *Agur* prays

to

to be delivered from *thoſe crimes* that *made thoſe men* ſo *evil* and ſo *formidable*. *He* prays to be *delivered* from the *Crimes*; the *Pſalmiſt* from the *Criminals*.

3. That in his Life he may be preſerved from minding *vain* and *trifling* things. And then it agrees with the *Pſalmiſt*'s Requeſt. *Turn away mine eyes from beholding Vanity*; and then he adds, *quicken thou me in thy way*. And then *Agur* begs (what we had all need with the greateſt fervency to beg) that God would preſerve him from a *vain* and *trifling Mind*; a Mind that is entertained with *fruitleſs* and *empty* things. Pſal. 119. 37.

And this may greatly ſerve for our *Inſtruction*. It may teach us *what* to *pray* for, and *what* to *endeavour* after; even *before* the things of *this life*.

That God would give us *truth in the inward parts*: This is, indeed, the higheſt *Wiſdom*, and the greateſt *Policy*, to uſe *ſincerity* in *all* our Words and Actions: He that makes *Lyes* his Refuge, he leans upon that which hath no power to prop and hold him up: *Honeſty* and great *ſimplicity* of Heart is the *beſt policy*: and will be found ſo at the long run. We do but *cheat our ſelves*, when

when we *deceive others*; and ſhall but intangle our ſelves in our worldly Craft. *Vanity and Lyes*, however we take them for our *Refuge*, will be our *Torment* and our *Ruine*. They will ſtand us in *little ſtead here*, but *hereafter* they will leave us deplorably miſerable. They many times *fail* us *here*, and the crafty Sinner is *diſcovered*, and *forſaken*, and *miſſes his aim* in *this Life*; but, then, he will be ſure to fall into the Miſeries of the *next*. There will none be admitted in the *future Glory*, that have been
Apoc. 22. 15. *given over to Vanity and Lyes*. 'Tis *our Intereſt* then, to join with *Agur* in his Requeſt: 'Tis *many times* ſo in *this* Life, and *always* in the *Life to come*. For *he*
1 Pet. 3. 10. *that will love life, and ſee good days, let him refrain his Tongue from evil, and his Lips that they ſpeak no guile.*

And let us beg of God too, that he would *turn away our Eyes from beholding Vanity:* That he would deliver us from a *vain* and *trifling Spirit*. There are many men whoſe whole life is ſpent in purſuit of *Vanity and Lyes*. They purſue nothing but *Shadows*, they graſp at a *Cloud*, and neglect the *Deity:* They are bent upon fading and Temporal things, and neglect Eternal. Now all theſe

theſe things are but *Vanity and Lyes:* And he that purſues theſe things with the neglect of God and his future ſtate, he does but *walk in a vain ſhew, and diſquiet himſelf in vain.* I proceed now to the

Second part of *Agur's Requeſt*, *Give me*— Here I ſhall conſider the *Requeſt* it ſelf, and the *Reaſon* of it. The *Requeſt* is but *one*, but is *two ways expreſſed.* (1.) *Negatively*, by *removing* the *extremes; Give me neither Poverty nor Riches.* (2.) *Poſitively*, *feed me with food convenient for me*—— This is the *mean* betwixt the two *extreams*; and this is the *main* of his *Requeſt*, and therefore here I ſhall *begin.* v. 9.

Feed me with Food convenient for me. לחם חקי we tranſlate *convenient Food*, τὰ δεόντα καὶ τὰ αὐτάρκη, LXXII. *Victui meo neceſſaria.* V. L. מסתי לחמא Targ. *i. e.* enough, a competent or ſufficient Maintenance, as 'tis oppoſed to *Abundance* or to *Want. That* is the *daily Bread*, which we are taught to *pray for.* Mat. 6. 11. ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον, *i. e.* what is fit, ἐπὶ τὴν οὐσίαν, for our *ſubſiſtence* in this mortal ſtate. And to that purpoſe 'tis rendered by the *Syriack Verſion* לחמא דבונקנן *neceſſary*

ceſſary Bread: ſuch an allowance as what is needfull for us. But ſtill we are to conſider, *what* is meant by *Food convenient*; or *what* this *Expreſſion* may *import* unto us: And we may take the *Importance* of it in the following *Severals*.

1. *Such* a *competency*, as *Nature* requires to the preſerving of *Life* and *Health*; enough to *ſuſtain* us, and to anſwer all the *needs* of *Nature*. There are certain Neceſſaries of the Body. Jam. 2. 16. *Theſe* the *Apoſtle* calls *Food and Raiment*. 1 Tim. 6. 8. Now all this is but *little*. 'Tis *Luſt* that is *coſtly*; *Nature* is *not*. *Ventre nihil novi frugalius.* A *little* will ſerve us for *Food* and *Raiment*, if we do not take our Meaſures from our *Luſts* but from our real *needs*. *Nature* craves *not much*; and *Grace* does *not enlarge* its *deſires*. There are *many* things which we *uſe*, but do not *need*.

V. Ab. Exp. in locum.

2. *Such* a *competency* as agrees with our *Condition* and *Circumſtances* of Life. The *ſame dimenſion* will not ſerve *every* man. *That* will be to *one* man *competent*, which to *another* will be *ſhort*, and to a *third more* than *enough*. We have not all the *ſame Needs*, nor will the *ſame Meaſure* ſerve. A *Father* of *Children*, and

and *Maſter* of a *numerous* and *helpleſs Family* wants *more* than a *ſingle* man. *Princes* and *publick perſons* have *greater wants* than *private men.*

But the meaning of theſe words may be gathered from the *Extreams* which he *deprecates. Give me neither Poverty nor Riches:* Neither *want* of what *I need*, nor yet a *ſuperfluity.* And then the words muſt be underſtood *Relatively* to our ſeveral *Needs*, according to our *condition* of Life. *Poverty* and *Riches are as* our *Neceſſities* are. He that *wants* is *poor*; and he that *hath more* than he *needs*, or *enjoys*, is *rich.* The *ſame* Portion that would render *one* man *rich*, will leave *another poor.* The Fortunes of a *poor Prince* will make a *Subject rich*; and thoſe who are *poor*, in the midſt of their *Honours* and *great places*, have yet *enough* to *inrich meaner* men.

3. But then we muſt refer our ſelves to *God*; we muſt have a care that we do not *think* our Neceſſaries *more*, than indeed they *are.* Let *God* ſet the *Meaſure. He* is beſt able to *judge* what is a fit Dimenſion: and we muſt be willing to take, what *he judges* needfull.

It

Doctr. It appears then, that a *Competency* of the things of this World is moſt of all deſirable, *nor Poverty, nor Riches.* The words ſeem to imply a μεσότης, ſuch as we find, *Hoſ.* 6. 6. *I deſired Mercy and not Sacrifice:* for it follows, *and the knowledge of God more than Burnt-offerings.* And again, *Lay not up for your ſelves Treaſures upon Earth--- but lay up for your ſelves Treaſure in Heaven---* Matt. 6. 19, 20. *Labour not for the Meat which periſheth, but for the Meat which endureth to everlaſting life;* Joh. 6. 27. *Poverty* and *Riches* are not real Evils in *themſelves;* and therefore not *abſolutely* to be deprecated. They do not, of *themſelves, commend* us to *God,* nor *exclude* us from *his Favour. Riches hurt* us *not,* if we *uſe* them *well;* nor will *Poverty advantage* us, if we live in our *Crimes* and *Follies. He* was very *rich,* who was *the Father of the Faithfull,* and *the Friend of God:* And there are too many that are *very poor,* and *very evil* at the ſame time. But tho' they are not *Evils in themſelves,* yet they are *Snares* and *Temptations;* and a *moderate* and *competent* ſhare upon that account is *preferable.* 'Tis *that* which *Agur* prays for; and *that* which our *Lord*

V. Hieron. Epiſt. ad Salvinam.

Lord directs *us* to beg of God. *This* the *Apoſtle* would have us *contented* with. 1 Tim. 6. 8. We are not to *deſire more* of *this* World than what is *needfull* and *convenient*: when we tranſgreſs *we run into a Snare*. And we are to think our ſelves *well*, when we are placed *between* the *extreams*.

I ſhall give you the *Reaſon* of this, and that particularly as to the two *Extreams*; and ſhall *particularly conſider* the *Reaſons* which we find in the *Text*.

Firſt, *Agur* prays for a *competent* Eſtate, and *not Riches*.

1. Becauſe *Riches add nothing* to him that hath a *Competency*; nothing but *Care* and *Cumber*. A *Competency* ſerves *all* our *Needs* and natural *Neceſſities*, and makes us as *happy* as *this* World *can make* us; and then all the *reſt*, is not only a *Superfluity*, but a *Burden* alſo. He that hath what he *needs*, hath as much as *any* man, and is excuſed from the *Cares* and *Burdens* of *Abundance*. *Great plenty* is attended with *many Cares*, and with *Satiety*. *The ſleep of a labouring-man is ſweet, whether he eat little or much: But the abundance of the rich will not ſuffer him to ſleep*. Eccl. 5. 11. So that here's nothing

nothing *added* to the Man but a new *Burden* and *Trouble:* Nor is it a *little* or *ſingle trouble* that comes with *Riches*; the *Apoſtle* tells us, that they *pierce us through with many Sorrows.*

2. They *ſwell* our *Accounts* againſt *that great and terrible day.* He that has *received much*, has *much to account for.* We muſt anſwer for all our Lord's Money; for we are *Stewards*, and not *Proprietors*, under God. He has *intruſted* us with much, and will inquire into our *Adminiſtration.* The Apoſtle puts *rich men* in *mind* of *this.* God has appointed them to help the Needy; he is but intruſted; he is *God's Almoner*, and is to *take care* of the *Needy*. His Riches are beſt beſtowed *Cum iſto onere.* The care is taken off the *Poor*, but 'tis laid on the *Rich.* He hath not all his abundance given him for *himſelf* only; 'tis for *himſelf* and his *poor Neighbours.* He is a *Debtor*; and if he anſwer not *God's End*, an *unrighteous* one alſo. For as Riches may be unrighteouſly *gotten*, ſo they may be *kept* unrighteouſly alſo; and ſo they *are* when we do not *communicate* and *diſtribute:* and this makes them become *unrighteous Mammon.* So that there is not only a *Care* accompanies

1 Tim. 6. 18, 19.

accompanies *Riches*, but there's a *charge* upon them alſo.

There are ſeveral *other* diſadvantages of *Riches*, which a *mean* Eſtate is *exempted* from. They are followed with *Envy*, attended with great *Fears* and *Jealouſies*; draw about us *Flatterers*, rather than Friends; thoſe that ſhall *ſooth us* up in our *Sins*, rather than *reprove* us for them. Theſe are no *little* Evils: But I paſs to *that* in my *Text*.

3. *Leſt I be full and deny thee, and ſay, Who is the Lord?* Here's the *greateſt* danger, leſt we ſhould turn *Profane* and *Irreligious*, and caſt away the *fear* and *dread* of *God*. This is no new thing: *Riches* have *debauched* mens *Minds*, they have *ſtifled* the *apprehenſions* of a *Deity*: They have *corrupted* mens *Manners*, and introduced a *profane* and *ungodly* temper of Mind.

When *Jeſurun waxed fat, he kicked. Iſrael* was then *corrupted*, when they *proſpered*. 'Tis *then* they are *cautioned not to forget God*, when their *worldly good increaſed*: No wonder then that the *Apoſtle* would have *rich men charged, that they be not high-minded*. *Riches* are apt, through the pravity of our Nature,

Deut. 6. 12. ch. 8. 10, 11. 1 Tim. 6. 17.

ture, to *ſwell us*, and *puff us up:* And we do too often ceaſe to be *good*, as we grow to be *great*. 'Tis not every one that can digeſt and concoct great Plenty and Proſperity: We are not able to bear Plenty and Abundance. The *Church of Chriſt declined* in *Piety*, after ſhe *increaſed* in *Wealth:* Then were her *Children* moſt obedient to *God*, when they had leaſt regard from *Men*. 'Tis this makes *Agur* deprecate *Riches*; for fear he ſhould loſe the *fear of God*. We are then in great *danger* when we are *full*. The *World* generally *deſtroys* us when it *ſmiles* and *ſpeaks fair:* And we owe moſt of our proficiency in Goodneſs, not to our *Plenty*, but our *Afflictions*. When *Iſrael* was in *diſtreſs*, *then they remembred God.*

Pſal. 78.

Plenty is the *parent*, or at leaſt the *occaſion* of *many Vices:* 'Twas the *caſe* of *Sodom*; *Pride, and fulneſs of Bread, and abundance of Idleneſs was in her.* It is not eaſie to reckon up the Vices that *Plenty* is apt to betray us to. It ſwells us with *Pride* and *Haughtineſs*, extinguiſhes the lively *ſenſe* of *God*, which ought to be always upon our Minds. It renders our *Prayers languid* and *weak*, and our *Vices* it gives *Fuel* and *Nouriſhment*

Ezek. 16. 49.

ment unto. It *chokes* the *Word of God*, it *hides* our *Sins* from *our Eyes*, and makes us *forget* the *Needs of others*.

Before I proceed to the other *Extream* I ſhall make ſome *Uſe* of what has been ſaid.

(1.) This may ſerve to *extinguiſh* our *vehement deſires* after *Riches*. They are not worth our vigorous purſuit, upon *our own* account, or upon *our Childrens*. He that deſires them *vehemently*, would be *miſerable* if he *ſhould obtain*; for to *ſuch* men they are never like to be a *Bleſſing*. They prove their *bane* and their *ruine*; and they are like *Rachel*, who *deſired Children* paſſionately, and *dyed* in *bringing forth*. Nor are they ſuch a *Portion* for *Children*, as we may *ſuppoſe* them. We often ſee them *preſerved* to *their hurt*, and *miniſter* to *their Vices*, and *ruine their Souls*. How many have been deſtroyed by this means! They have nouriſhed them in *Sloth* and *Neglect*; and precipitated them to many *Woes* and *Miſeries*.

(2.) This may ſerve for the *Inſtruction* of the *Rich*. They had need be upon their *guard*: Their *danger* is *great*, their *temptations* are *many*. They will need

an *Almighty Hand* to keep them upright under so great a weight. They had need *pray often*, that they may *not have their Portion in this Life*; and that God would keep them *above* their Store and Plenty. And for their security I would recommend to them,

1. *Works* of *Piety* towards *God*. They had need be *frequent* and *fervent* in their *Devotions*: They had need *sequester* themselves from their *Worldly Cares*, and allow themselves their times of *Retirement* and *Religious Solitude*. This is *one advantage* they have, that they have *more time* at command than the *Poor*, who are forced to *labour* for their *Bread*: 'Twill be greatly for their *advantage* that they *improve* it well.

2. *Works* of *Charity* and *Mercy*: *Eleemosynæ sunt sal divitiarum*. We cannot *secure* them *better* than *this way*; and there are *ways enough* to *express* this *Charity*: There are *those* that *want Bread*, and *more* that *want Instruction*: there are *many in Prison*, and *more in Want*. We may do much to the *Souls*, the *Bodies*, and *Estates* of Men, if we will but make it our care: 'Tis this the *Apostle directs* unto. All the danger is from the τὸ ςάσιμον τȣ̃ πλȣ́τȣ. The Water

1 Tim. 6. 8. *V. Basil. de divitiis & paupert. Conc. 5.*

Water that *ſtands ſtill* corrupts and is unprofitable; but that which *runs* is ſweet and wholſome. 'Tis ſo with *Riches*; τὸ μὲν ϛάσιμον ἄχρηστον. Be *exhorted* then to Works of *Mercy* and of *Kindneſs*: To imitate thy *Lord*'s Example, *who went about doing good*. This is the way to turn *Riches* into a great *Bleſſing*; to gain *Eternal* good things in lieu of *Temporal*. If we do this, we ſhall *make Friends of the unrighteous Mammon; and ſhall, when theſe things fail, be received into an everlaſting Habitation. Which God of his Mercy grant, for Chriſt his ſake.*

SERMON VIII.

PROV. XXX. 7, 8, 9.

Two things have I required of thee, deny me them not before I die. Remove far from me Vanity and Lyes: Give me neither Poverty nor Riches; feed me with Food convenient for me. Leſt I be full and deny thee, and ſay, who is the Lord: Or leſt I be poor and ſteal, and take the Name of my God in vain.

II. AGUR prays for a *competent* Eſtate, and *not Poverty*.

It may perhaps ſeem ſtrange, that he that deprecated *Riches* ſhould *deprecate Poverty* alſo: Eſpecially ſince it hath ſo *many Advantages*; and that it has been not only the *Lot*, but ſometimes

times the *Choice* too of very *excellent* Perſons.

For tho' Riches be a *Cumber*, and render us liable to a *greater* Account, yet *Poverty rids* us of theſe Cares, and makes us more *ſecure* and *expedite*; *ſi vis vacare animo, aut pauper ſis oportet, aut pauperi ſimilis.* Poverty rids us of our uneaſie Cares and Fears; it puts us in a poſture that ſuits well with men that may ſoon be taken hence. It is very ſecure, and unconcerned in the great changes below. It frees us from the dangers of *Envy*, and *Rapine:* It renders men undaunted and daring: It takes from us the Ability of doing any great Miſchief in the World. *Senec. Epiſt.* 17.

Beſides that it hath been frequently the *Companion* of the *greateſt Vertue.* It has not *debauched* mens Manners as *Riches* have. If we look over paſt times, the *greateſt Debauchees*, and *vileſt Sinners* have been thoſe that have been *full of Riches*; you will not find frequently the Poor amongſt them: But on the other hand, men that have been *poor* have been very *Vertuous* at the ſame time. When *Rome* was *poor*, 'twas then *Valiant*, and *Juſt*, 'twas *Strong* and *Great*; but when it grew great in *Wealth*, it grew *Weak*

and *Debauched*. *Plenty* has *ruined* many *Men*, many *Families* and *Cities*, and *Common-wealths*; but for *Poverty*, *what Evil has it done?*

V Apuleii Apolog pro ſeipſ. 1. Many *excellent men*, even amongſt the *Heathens*, were *very poor*; and yet *they* were the great *Defenders* of their *Country*, and the great *Ornament* and *Glory* of it. *Poverty*, as one ſays, among the *Greeks*, was *juſt* in *Ariſtides*, in *Phocion* 'twas *kind*, *valiant* in *Epaminondas*, *wiſe* in *Socrates*, and *eloquent* in *Homer*. But alas! I ſhall not need to ſay *this* of it; for I have more to ſay.

Our *Lord* was *poor*, and ſo were the *firſt Planters* of *Chriſtianity*; *of whom this World was not worthy*. We are *like our Lord* when we are *poor*; and he pronounceth a *Bleſſedneſs* upon *the Poor*: And they were the *Poor* who had *the* Matt. 11. *Goſpel preached unto them*. 'Twas a *Jewiſh* conceit, that the *Spirit of God* did not *reſt* upon a *poor* man. *Our Saviour* preaches to *them*; *they* have the offer of *Eternal Glories*. And therefore *Poverty* is not inconſiſtent with *real Goodneſs*: And why ſhould *Poverty*, then, be *deprecated?*

I ſhall therefore give an account of ſome of the *Diſadvantages* of *Poverty*; and

and particularly consider the *Reason* in the words of my *Text.*

1. *Poverty* deprives us of the *opportunity* of *doing* that *good* which *else* we *might* do: And this is one of the greatest Evils of it. The *poor* man *cannot* help the *needy*, as the *rich may.* 'Tis certainly a *more blessed thing to give, than to receive:* And besides the future Reward, there's a *pleasure* that *follows close* upon *doing Kindnesses.* It is accompanied with *Joy here*, and a great *Reward* remains for it *hereafter.* 'Tis an *Infelicity not to be able* to help the Needy: And one of the *Heathen Emperours*, amongst other things, acknowledges it as a *Favour* of the Gods, that he *never wanted Money, whenever* he was *inclined* to *help* the *Necessitous. Plenty*, upon *this* score, is a great *Felicity* to a *good man:* And upon this account 'tis worth our *while* to be *Rich*; and worth our *Labour* and *Industry* it is, to *provide* our selves with something to *give away. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good: that he may have to give to him that needeth.* There are great *Blessings* belong to the *Bountifull; Treasures of Wickedness profit nothing:*

Marc. Antonin. l. 2. §. 14.

Eph. 4. 28.

Prov. 2. 10.

thing: but Righteouſneſs delivereth from Death. There are great *Bleſſings* of *this* and a *future* life that belong to the *Almsgiver*, and *Liberal* man.

Dan. 4. 27. Luk. 16. 9.

'Tis true indeed, God does not *expect* more than he hath given. He accepts the *Will* for the *Deed*, in this caſe. But yet ſtill, the *Poor* has not the *opportunity* of doing the good he would, nor *that pleaſure* that follows it, nor that *Evidence* and *Experiment* of his *Sincerity*, as *he* has that has a *plentifull Eſtate* and a *large Heart*. For 'tis ſtill *more bleſſed to give than to receive:* And not to be *able*, tho' it be none of our *fault*, yet muſt be eſteem'd our *Infelicity*. For to *do good* is one of thoſe things which makes us *like* unto *God* himſelf: And 'tis our great *Happineſs* as well as our *Duty* to be like him: We are commanded to be *perfect*, *as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect*. That is, to *do good to all*, as appears from the *Context*: And St. *Luke* hath it, *Be ye therefore Mercifull, as your Father alſo is Mercifull.* We are obliged to *do good* to *all* men. *Give to him that asketh; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn thou not away.* But *Poverty* ties our Hands, and renders us *unable* to do this; and

Mat. 5. 48. Luk. 6. 36. Gal. 6. 10. Mat. 5. 42.

and certainly muſt, upon that ſcore, be an *unhappineſs*. The *Jews* were commanded to keep the *Feaſt of Tabernacles*: then they *forſook* their *Houſes*, and *dwelt* in *Booths*. But it might happen to be a very *wet* Seaſon, and then their *Booths* were inconvenient: and when it *did ſo*, they looked on it as an *unhappineſs*; and were wont to *expreſs* the unhappineſs of ſuch a Seaſon by *this*, that 'twas as if a man were to fill or mingle a Cup for his *Rabbi* or *Maſter*, and he ſhould *throw* it in his *Servant's Face*; that is, they judged it an Infelicity, when their Service was rendred *hard*, or *impoſſible* to be performed. 'Tis certain, that the *Rich* are *under thoſe* obligations that the *Poor* are *exempt* from: And they have reaſon to *bleſs God*, that they are *able* to do that good, which *others* are *unable* to perform. *Succah c. 2. m. 9.*

2. *Poverty* renders *good Inſtructions*, and a *good example* leſs *available*: And thus again the *poor* man is not like to do that good in the World that *another* man may do. *There was a little City, and few men within it: and there came a great King againſt it, and beſieged it, and built great Bulwarks againſt it. Now there was found in it a poor wiſe man; and he by his* Eccl. 9. 14.—

his Wiſdom delivered the City: Yet no man remembred that ſame poor man. Then ſaid I, Wiſdom is better than Strength: Nevertheleſs the poor man's Wiſdom is deſpiſed, and his Words not heard. Our *Lord* himſelf was upon this account *deſpiſed*; and the *firſt Preachers* of *Chriſtianity*, were under *this* diſadvantage. A *good Example* is very *available*; and *right words* have their *force*: but *greatneſs* gives them a *Luſtre* and *Reputation* in the World. To be *great* and *good* do *much* avail; *Such* Examples have a mighty *force* upon the World. *Poverty* is deſpiſed and overlooked, it is without notice and obſervation. Beſides, that the Virtues that attend that condition are miſconſtrued; *Temperance* here, is judged rather proceeding from *neceſſity* than *choice*: The greateſt *Meekneſs* is looked on as the Indication of an *abject* and *low Spirit*; and *Piety* and *Godlineſs* is either *not obſerved* or *not believed.*

——*Pauper contemnere Numen*
Creditur atque Deos, Diis ignoſcentibus ipſis.

The *poor* man's *Example*, be it never ſo *good*, yet hath it not ſuch *influence* as

as that of the *Rich* hath. *They* have their many Servants and Dependants, many that court them and ſeek their Favour, many that expect from them and live upon their Bounty; and conſequently have *greater advantages* of recommending Vertue and Piety: And men do more eaſily *follow ſuch* Examples as *theſe* are.

3. Poverty deprives us of that *leiſure* and *time* to wait *upon God without diſtraction*, which *others* have the command of. They that ſerve God had need be at leiſure; they had need ſet apart ſome conſiderable portions of their time about it. If we would that our *Religion* ſhould turn to *account*, we muſt make it our *Buſineſs* and *Work*; and we muſt *hoc agere, attend to this very thing*. And *happy* are they that have their *time* at *command* for ſo great a purpoſe. For to ſerve God requires great attention and indiſtraction, 'tis

Magnæ mentis opus, nec de lodice paranda
Attonitæ——

Now here, *they* that have *Plenty* and *Freedom*, have the advantage of the

Neceſſitous

Neceſſitous and *Poor*, of *Servants* and thoſe that are under the diſpoſe of *others*. This is no ſmall advantage, and we ſhall find it ſo, if we uſe it aright. But then the *Poor* wants this; they that want *Bread* for *themſelves*, and their *numerous Family*, cannot ſpend thoſe portions of *time* in their *Retirements* and *Devotions*.

I do not ſpeak this as if the *Poor* might therefore think themſelves *diſcharged* from *God's Service*. Tho' it be not in their power to allow ſo *much* time as others, yet are they obliged to allow *what they can*: And they had better find time for *this* Service, tho' they *work* the *harder*, and *eat* the *leſs*. And ſure if they *love God*, and *delight* to *ſerve him*, they will find time for it: Beſides, that they have great reaſon to believe, that *God* will *provide* them of the *Neceſſaries* of life, if they *ſeek him* in the *firſt* place.

But all that hath been named is an *Infelicity* rather than a *Fault*. Theſe are not the *Crimes* of the *Poor*, but the *Miſeries* rather. They are not things that fall under *our Choice* and *Power*. We ſhall not be condemned for our *Impotency* and *Inability*. The *Almighty* does *not require*, what he hath *not given*. The *greateſt* Evil is behind ſtill, *viz.*

4. *Poverty*

4. *Poverty* is a great *temptation* to *Sin*, 'tis a *ſnare*, and an *occaſion* of a *greater Evil* than it is of *it ſelf*. We are obnoxious on *both* hands to the Impreſſions of the *Tempter*. If we be *Rich* we are in *danger:* and ſo we are if we be *Poor*. We fall upon each occaſion. *Otherwiſe neither* of theſe are *deprecated* by *Agur:* 'Tis upon *this* ſcore he *prays* againſt it,

Leſt I be poor and ſteal— i. e, *leſt being poor, I ſteal; and take the Name*— Theſe words contain the *reaſon why* he deprecates *Poverty*. And that in *two* Particulars: Firſt, *Leſt I be poor and ſteal.* Secondly, *And take the Name of*——

Firſt, Leſt I be poor and ſteal. A *great Sin* indeed, *Theft.* A *great Temptation, Poverty.*

Theft, is the *Sin*; and no *ſmall* one neither: 'Tis the *breach* of the *Moral Law.* 'Twas no *ſmall Sin*; for a *Sacrifice alone* would not make *Expiation* for it: There muſt be *Reſtitution* alſo; as ye ſhall hear anon. It is a Sin of a *large extent. He* does not only ſteal that *forcibly takes away* what is his *Neighbours*, but he that *defrauds* and *cheats* him any way, he that *outwits* and

circumvents

circumvents him: He that *conceals* from him what is his; that *detains* and *keeps* it from him, however he came into the poſſeſſion of it. All this is *Theft*. *If*
Lev.6.2,3 *a Soul ſin, and commit a treſpaſs againſt the Lord, and lye unto his Neighbour, in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowſhip, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his Neighbour, or hath found that which was loſt*, &c. *Theft* is of a *large* extent. *They* may be *guilty* that rob not on the Way, that break through no Houſe, that uſe no Force, or Violence. He that craftily circumvents an ignorant man, that conceals the Truth, and that deals inſincerely in his Commerce, *he* is a *Thief* in *God's account*. And *ſo* men may be in their *Shops*, and upon their *Exchanges*; in *Marts* and *Fairs*; in their *Services* and *Offices*. He that *takes from* his *Neighbour*; or that does *not reſtore* his due to him, is a *Thief*. We muſt *not meaſure* the *Sin* by the extent of *Humane* Laws. We may be *guilty* where *no Law of man* can find us out, and inflict a Penalty.

Poverty is the *Temptation* to this Offence: And a *great* one it is, by reaſon of the *weakneſs* and *pravity* of Humane Nature. Great *want* is apt to render men

men *doubtfull* of the *Divine Providence* and *Care*, and *then* they are *tempted* to *indirect* courſes to help themſelves, when they look upon themſelves as *forſaken of God*. They will be *tempted* to *take* what *God* has *not given*; and where they think themſelves *neglected by God*, they will make no ſcruple to *ſhift for themſelves*. *Extreme Poverty* many times leaves the Soul very *abject* and *cheap*, very *unjuſt* and *unrighteous*: It does frequently *debaſe*, and many times *debauch* the Souls of men. Men naturally have too *dull* and *ſtupid a ſenſe* of the *Divine Goodneſs*, of the gracious *Providence* of God. *That Senſe* they have of it, if it be not *choked* by *Abundance*, yet 'tis, many times, *ſtarved* by *Penury* and *Want*. Such men as theſe *loſe the Senſe* of the *Divine Goodneſs* and *Care* in their *Adverſity*, like as Travellers *loſe* the *ſight* of *Turrets* and *Steeples*, when they paſs into *lower Grounds* and *Bottoms*; and *then*, becauſe *they* have *loſt* the *ſight* of *God*, they are apt to think *he ſees not them*, and to ſay, *How does God know? and is there knowledge in the moſt high?* And thus, he that is *poor* is *tempted to ſteal*; as *he* that is *rich* to *deny God*, and to ſay, *Who is the Lord?*

Secondly, And take the Name of my God in vain; i. e. Left I be *tempted* to *forſwear* my ſelf: This is *another Sin* that *Poverty* renders men *obnoxious* unto: They are tempted to *ſteal* firſt; and then they commonly *deny* the Fact; and *that*, many times, with an *Oath* too. *Theft* is a Sin which hardly *any man* will *own*: and then there is danger of *Perjury* in the caſe, that they may *hide* it the more. But I ſhall obſerve the *Connexion* between theſe *two*; which ſeems not at *firſt ſight* to be ſo *cloſe* as *it is*.

Among the *Jews*, the *Thief* did not *die* for his Theft, but was obliged to make *Reſtitution*: and in caſe he were not *able* to do it, he was to be *ſold* for a *Servant*. Now he that was *ſuſpected* of *Theft* amongſt them, in caſe there *wanted* ſufficient *Evidence* againſt him, was put to his *Oath* for his *Purgation*; and then, he that was guilty of *Theft* was *tempted* to *Perjury* alſo: for if he were *able*, he was bound to make *Reſtitution*; and that, ſometimes, of ſeveral fold: if he were *unable*, he was *ſold* for a Servant, and loſt his Liberty. This was a *Snare* upon him; and he would lie under a *Temptation* to *ſwear falſly*, i. e. *To take the Name of God in vain.*

That

That *this* was the *Vſe* under *Moſes* his *Law*, will appear from *ſeveral Texts*. *If a Soul ſin, and commit a treſpaſs againſt the Lord, and lye unto his Neighbour, in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowſhip, or in a thing taken away by violence; or hath deceived his Neighbour, or have found that which was loſt, and lyeth concerning it, and ſweareth falſly.* Where we find that *Lying* and *Swearing falſly* follow *cloſe* upon his *Theft* and *Cozenage*; and do queſtionleſs *relate* to the matter *before-mentioned*. Again, *If the Thief be not found, then the Maſter of the Houſe ſhall be brought unto the Judges, to ſee whether he have not put his Hand unto his Neighbour's Goods.* His being brought unto the *Judges* was in order to the *Swearing* him, *that he had not put his Hand to his Neighbour's Goods.* And to *that Senſe* the *V. Latin* has rendered thoſe words, אם לא שלח ידו, *& jurabit quod non extenderit manum.* — Again, *If a man deliver unto his Neighbour an Aſs, or an Ox, or a Sheep, or any Beaſt, to keep, and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man ſeeing it, then ſhall an Oath of the Lord be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his Neighbour's Goods.*

Levit. 6. 2, 3.

V. Aben Ezra in locum.

Exod. 22. 8.

V. Raſhi & Ab. Ezra. in locum.

v. 10, 11.

Hence it appears, that he that was *ſuſpected* of *Theft*, was *put to his Oath*; and then 'tis not hard to ſay, why *taking the Name of God in vain* ſhould follow upon *Stealing* here. Nay we ſhall find *elſewhere*, that *Theft* and *Perjury* are *joined* together, as well as *here*. *Ye ſhall not ſteal, neither deal falſly, nor lye one to another; and ye ſhall not ſwear by my Name falſly, neither ſhalt thou profane the Name of thy God.* We read of a *flying Roll* in *Zechariah*; and 'tis added, *This is the Curſe that goeth over the face of the whole Earth: For every one that ſtealeth ſhall be cut off as on this ſide according to it; and every one that ſweareth ſhall be cut off as on that ſide according to it. I will bring it forth, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, and it ſhall enter into the Houſe of the Thief, and into the Houſe of him that ſweareth falſly by my Name.* Thus *Theft* and *Perjury* are forbid *at once*; they are *puniſhed together*: And no wonder then that they ſhould be *joined* by *Agur*, as the *two great Evils* that *Poverty* is apt to betray us unto.

Levit. 19. 11, 12.

Zech. 5. 3, 4.

Levit. 19. 11, 12. Zech 5. 4.

There are ſeveral *Corollaries* which I may draw from what hath been ſaid before; and then I ſhall make ſome *Uſe*.

1. That

1. That there is no reaſon we have to *cry up affected Poverty*, and to repute it a ſtate of *Religious Perfection*; however the *Church of Rome* may magnify it. 'Tis *that* which *Agur prays againſt*. 'Tis a ſtate of *Tryal* and *Temptation*. 'Tis an *Infelicity*, in as much as *'tis a more bleſſed thing to give than to receive*. The *Apoſtle* would have us *labour* for *ſomething* to *beſtow*. He requires we ſhould *do good to all men*: But *that* we ſhall not be *able* to do *under Poverty*. Indeed the *Poor* are pronounced *bleſſed* by our *Saviour*. But 'tis not *poverty* of *Eſtate*, but of *Spirit* that intitles us unto it. And the *poor have the Goſpel preached unto them*: But then 'tis their *Meekneſs* that is regarded. *Poverty* does not make us *perfect*: we have the *Bleſſing* upon another ſcore. *Poverty* does not of *it ſelf* make us *Bleſſed*: Our *Vices* and our *Poverty* may conſiſt together: And when it is *ſo*, our *Poverty* intitles us to no *Bleſſing*. We may be *good* in *Plenty*, and *evil* in the greateſt *Penury* and *Want*. Luk. 6. 20. Matt. 5. 3. Mat. 11. 5. Iſai. 61. 1.

2. A man's *Poverty* does not *excuſe* his *Theft*. *Our Want* does not give us *warranty* to *invade* the Rights of *other men*: And becauſe *other* men *have Su-*

perfluities, and *we want* what we judge *needfull*, we may not think that we have therefore a *Liberty* to *take* from *others* what they *may* well *ſpare*. *Our Neceſſity* will not give *us Authority* to uſe *indirect courſes* to *help our ſelves*. *Our Needs* will not revive the *primæval* right of things. *Agur does not think that Poverty* will *excuſe our Theft*. It continues a *fault* ſtill, tho' we have a great *temptation* to commit it. If we *cannot dig*, let us not be *aſhamed to beg*. 'Tis not the *unrighteouſneſs* of the *Steward* is *commended* to us; 'tis his *Wiſdom* only.

Luke 16. v. 8.

3. We may learn hence the *greatneſs* of *their Sins* who have but a *little* or *no temptation* to it. If *Poverty* will *not excuſe Theft*, how hainous is the Sin of *thoſe* men who commit that and other Sins *without* ſuch a Temptation. There are thoſe that *ſteal*, that *defraud* and *circumvent* their Brother, not becauſe they are extreamly *poor*, but becauſe they are *greedy* of *great Riches*, and will gratify their *Luſt* and *inordinate Deſires*. And how *many Sinners* are there that *ſin greatly*, when their *Temptation* is *ſmall* or *none* at all? that are not led by *Poverty* to *Theft* and *Perjury*; but *ſin* when they

they may eaſily *avoid* it? There are a great many *cheap* Sinners in the World: The *common Swearer* is *ſuch* an one. There's *no Temptation* to this moſt *abhorred* Crime: And he that *ſwears commonly*, may be *preſumed* ſometimes to *ſwear falſly*: And he that does ſo is *gratis malus*. And how great an aggravation is it to our Crimes, that we are *guilty* when we might *eaſily avoid* them? *Men do not deſpiſe a Thief, if he ſteal to ſatisfie his Soul when he is hungry:* Yet for all that he is a *Criminal* ſtill; for it follows, *But if he be found, he ſhall reſtore ſeven fold, he ſhall give all the ſubſtance of his Houſe.* But then he that ſteals and does *not want*, is ſtill the *greater* Sinner; for 'tis *no little fault* to be guilty of a *Sin* that we *no temptation* unto. And yet ſo it is, many times, the *Swearer* might as eaſily *bleſs God*, as he *takes his Name in vain.* Nor is it *harder* to *ſpeak well* of our Neighbour, than to *ſpeak amiſs.* Many of our Sins we *may eaſily avoid*; and certainly, if we do it not, we *add* to our *Guilt*, and ſhall *increaſe* our *Condemnation.* Prov. 6. 30, 31.

4. He that would *avoid* a *Sin* muſt *ſhun* the *Temptation* that would lead him to it. *Agur* would neither *deny God*, nor

take his *Name in vain.* Hence it is that he deprecates *Poverty* and *Riches.* We muſt ſhun the *occaſion*, if we would be kept from the *Sin.* We pray that God would *forgive* our Sins, but then it follows, and *lead us not into temptation.* We muſt avoid the *Evil*, and every thing which *leads* to it.

One Sin infers and draws us on to *another.* He that *ſteals firſt*, afterwards *takes the Name of God in vain.* Thus does Sin prevail upon us, by certain *ſteps* and *degrees : Nemo repente fit turpiſſimus.* Sin is like a *Gangrene*, it ſpreads by *degrees :* And he that admits *one*, opens the *way* to the *reſt.* We do not know *where* we ſhall *ſtop.* When *David* committed *Adultery* he *ſtopped* not, tho' he *intended* to proceed *no farther* at firſt, but he goes on, and *murders* the innocent alſo. He that *ſteals* will be *tempted* to *lye*, and to *forſwear* himſelf. Thus does *Sin* ſteal upon us ; we are taken by *degrees* ; and men do this way *run* into thoſe foul Sins which *once* they *abhorred* the *thought* of. Of ſo *ill* conſequence is it willingly to admit of *any* known Sin !

6. We may hence *learn*, that Sin is the *greateſt Evil. Poverty* is ſo far from being

being ſo, that 'tis deprecated only as it is an *occaſion* of Sin. That's *truly* an *Evil* which makes *us* ſo. *Sin* is the *greateſt* of *Evils*. 'Tis an *affront* to the *Almighty*, 'tis *contrary* to him; 'tis *worſe*, not only than *Poverty*, but than *Hell* it ſelf; ſo much worſe as the *Cauſe* is worſe than the *Effect*. *This* has *kindled* the *Flames* of *Hell*; *enlarged Tophet*, and *added* to its *Pile*. The *fault* is always a *greater evil* than the *puniſhment*: And if *Hell* be *formidable* how *ugly* muſt *ſin* be, that hath made it ſo? *This* alone has *ſpotted* the *Devils*, made them *deformed* and *miſerable*: Could *ſin* be *ſeparated* they would *clear up* into *Angels of Light*. He that departs from *God* forſakes his *Happineſs*; and *partakes* ſo much of *Hell*, as he is *removed* from *God's* Favour. This is a great *truth*, and that which we are much concerned throughly to *believe*. There's no Condition ſo deplorably *ſad* as that of the *Sinner*. He is the *worſt* of men *here*, and *hereafter* the moſt *miſerable*.

I ſhall now proceed to make ſome *Uſe* of what hath been ſaid.

1. We may learn hence to *avoid* the *occaſions* of Sin, to fly from the *Temptation*

tion that would lead us to Folly. 'Tis *this* that *Agur prays againſt*; and we are taught by our *Lord* to *pray*, *that* we *be not led into Temptation*. 'Tis *Solomon's* advice in the caſe of *Intemperance*;

Prov. 23. 1, 2. *When thou ſitteſt to eat with a Ruler, conſider diligently what is before thee, and put a Knife to thy Throat, if thou be a man given to Appetite.* This Advice is applicable to *all other* caſes whatſoever: He that would be *ſafe* muſt take the ſame

Prov. 4. 14, 15. *Wiſe Man's advice: Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, paſs not by it; turn from it, and paſs away.* We ſhall elſe run into the Mouth of Danger; and a great Peradventure but we ſhall fall. *If Sinners entice thee conſent thou not.* But 'twill be hard to reſiſt their *Importunity*, they will ſollicit vigorouſly, and encourage us in an evil courſe, as ye may ſee in the following words: And therefore nothing could have been more

Prov. 1. 10, 15. *ſeaſonably adviſed* than that which *follows*; *My Son walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path. Ill Examples, and ill Company* is the *bane* of Mankind: This is the *common temptation* to *Evil*: And he takes the only *ſafe* courſe that *avoids* it. *Bleſſed*

ſed is the man that walketh not in the counſel of the ungodly, nor ſtandeth in the way of ſinners, nor ſitteth in the ſeat of the ſcornfull. Pſal. 1. 1.

2. Let us be *contented* with a *competent portion* of the things of this Life. *Riches* are apt to *exalt* us *againſt God, who gave them*; *Poverty* to *depreſs* us, and *extinguiſh* out of our Minds the *ſenſe* of his *good Providence*. The *one* will be apt to make us queſtion his *Soveraignty*; the *other*, his *Care* and *good Providence*. And therefore we have great reaſon, not only to be *content* in a *mean eſtate*, but to *bleſs God* alſo, that he has *provided* ſo *well* for us. There are *few* men can bear *either* of the *Extreams*: And tho' *neither* of them are *inconſiſtent* with *God's* Favour, yet are they attended with *hazard* and *danger*.

3. The *Rich* and the *Poor* may learn hence to be upon their *Guard*. The *one* that they do not diſtruſt and divert into *unlawfull courſes* to *help* themſelves: the *other*, that they be not *lifted up* againſt God; but on the *other hand*, *humble and heavenly-minded*, *thankfull* to *God*, and *charitable* to their *neceſſitous Brethren*; that they be not *overmuch tempted*, and *ſteal*, *and take the Name of God in vain*.

4. *and*

4. and *Laſtly*, All of us may hence be ſtirred up to purſue our *great* concern and intereſt; and that is the *Favour of God*, and the *Salvation* of our *Souls*. That we be *poor* or *rich*, abſtractedly conſidered, is of *little moment*; but of *infinite* that we be *good*. Let us be awakened to ſeek after *greater* things than *this World* can afford. We are born for *higher* Ends: And none of *theſe* things will be able to make us *happy* or *miſerable*. The time is coming, when nothing but *true Piety* will ſtand us in any ſtead; when 'twill afford us *no Joy* to think of our *Plenty*, or any *Sorrow*, to remember our *Penury* and *Want*. It is not long before that time will come, when our *Riches* will be *no Comfort*, and our *Poverty* no *Affliction* to us. Let us then in *time* provide for *Eternity*, and *ſeek* after *thoſe* things which will *never fail us*. Let us preſerve in our Minds a lively *ſenſe* of the *Soveraignty* and good *Providence* of God. Let us *love God*, and *do his Will*, and we ſhall *never fail*. The *Rich* and *Poor* are *lying down together*; they ſhall *both* be *laid* in the *common Duſt*; and ſhall fare *hereafter*, not as they have *proſpered*, or *ſuffered* here, but as they *lived*, *well*, *or ill*. Let us

then

then be perſwaded to a *Religious Life*; let us *be good*, and *do* all the *good* we can; and we ſhall not fail of the Happineſs of the *next*, whatever have been our portion in *this* life. *This* is the way to *eternal Reſt* and *Peace*; *to Glory and Immortality: Which God of his mercy grant us, for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake.*

Amen.

SER-

SERMON IX.

Preached at

St. Martin Outwich, London.

ACTS II. 42.

And they continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine, and Fellowſhip; and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers.

WE have an account, in the beginning of this Chapter, of the miraculous effuſion of the *Holy Ghoſt* at the Day of *Pentecoſt*. This was matter of great wonder and amazement to many that were at *Jeruſalem* at that time; but ſome Mockers there were, who were ſo Impudent as to charge the inſpir'd Diſciples of *Jeſus* as *filled with new Wine*. Upon this *Peter* V. 13.

ſtands

ſtands up and defends them; *Theſe*, ſays
he, *are not drunken, ſeeing it is but the* v. 15.
third hour of the day; i. e. The publick
Sacrifice, and *Prayer* attending on it,
was not over; and the Worſhipers of
God at the *great Feſtivals*, were not
wont to eat or drink before thoſe holy
Services were performed. He lets them
know, that what now happened, was
foretold by the Proper *Joel*. And then v. 16.
takes occaſion (as well he might) to
preach *Chriſt* to them. He tells them v. 22, 23.
their fault in Crucifying *Jeſus, a man*
approved of God, by Miracles, and Won-
ders, and Signs done among them. He
witneſſeth his *Reſurrection*, and lets them
know, that it was predicted by *David*; v. 24, 25.
and that the words which he cites to
this purpoſe, belong to this matter:
And that this Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt
was effected by *Jeſus, exalted to God's* v. 33.
right-hand: and thence concludes *Jeſus*
to be *both LORD and CHRIST*. Upon v. 36.
this warm and powerfull Diſcourſe they
are pricked in their Heart, and ask,
What they ſhall do? St. *Peter* puts them
upon *Repentance* and *Baptiſm*, and moves
them with the promiſe of *Forgiveneſs*
of Sins, and *gift of the Holy Ghoſt*. He
uſed many other words, and exhorted
them,

v. 40. them, saying, *Save your selves from this untoward Generation.* We have an account of the *Success* of this Sermon:
v. 41. *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand Souls.* Thus were they brought into the *Church* of *Christ*. They were *disposed* by *Preaching*, and *received* by *Baptism*. And in the words of my *Text* we have an account of the *Behaviour* of these first Christians; where we have the true *notes* and *marks* of the *Mother* and true *Catholick Church*; *and they continued stedfastly*, &c.

I hope 'twill be allowed that these first Christians were *good Catholicks*, and a fit good pattern for us to follow. I will (I.) Go over the *four* Particulars in my *Text*; they being the great things in which *Catholick Communion* consists, and *marks* of a true *Church*. (II.) I shall examine our *own Church* by them. (III.) I shall make some *Application*.

I. I shall go over the *Particulars* laid before us in my *Text*.

1. They continued stedfastly in the *Apostle's Doctrine*. They agreed in the same *Faith*, taught by the *Apostles*; and

and by *them* received from *Jesus Christ*; who had given them power, not only to receive into the Church, by *Baptism*, but to *teach whatsoever he had commanded.* This Doctrine is called the *Common Faith*, and the *one Faith*, and the *Faith once delivered to the Saints.* *Jesus* taught *them* all that was necessary, and this *they* delivered to the Believers. *I have received of the Lord, that which I have also delivered unto you.* Again, *I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received.* These holy men kept nothing back: *I have not shunned to declare unto you all the Counsel of God.*

Matt. 28. 20. Tit. 1. 4. Eph. 4. 5. Jud. v. 3. 1 Cor. 11. 23. 15. 3. Act. 20. 27.

Jesus made known to the *Apostles* the whole Will of God. *All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* He sent the *Spirit* to *guide* them into all *Truth*; and prays for them which should *believe on him through their word.*

Joh. 15. 15. ch. 16 13. ch. 17. 20.

This Doctrine which they received they delivered intirely, and confirmed. *They went forth and preached every where; the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.* They taught the People what was sufficient to *Salvation.* Hence the *Word* which they preached is sometime

Mark 16. 20. 1 Cor. 15. 2.

Act. 13. 26. 5. 20. Rom. 1. 16. 2 Cor. 2. 16. Gal. 1. 7. called the *Word* of *Salvation*, and the *Words of Life*: The *power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth*; and *a Savour of Life unto Life*. And *though we, or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*

What this *Doctrine* of the *Apostles* was, will be best known by their *Writings*; in which they frequently appeal to the *Old Testament* for confirmation of their *Doctrine*: And therefore the *Old* and *New Testament* together contain their Doctrine, and are, indeed, the *Rule of Faith and Manners*. Act. 24. 14. *After the way which they call Heresie* (says St. *Paul*) *so worship I the God of my Fathers; believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets.*

This was the *Rule* which the *first Christians* governed themselves by both as to *Faith* and *Manners*. This is that which the ancient *Fathers* and *Doctors* of the Church did appeal unto. What was not read here was not believed. This is a sure way of *conveighing* to us the *Doctrine* of the *Apostles*, through the darkest and most ignorant *Ages* of the Church; and therefore God thought fit

to

to inſpire *Holy Men* who ſhould commit this Doctrine to *Writing*, and not to leave it to the hazardous and more uncertain way of *Tradition*. If any thing now be obtruded on us as matter of *Faith*, we are not bound to receive it, unleſs it can be proved to come from *God*. For it is not in the power of any number of *men* to make new *Articles of Faith*. The holy *Apoſtles* delivered at firſt what was *neceſſary to Salvation*: And when men put upon us *Traditions* which they call *Divine*, or *Apoſtolical*, they will be obliged to *convince* us of *two* things before we are bound to entertain them: *Firſt*, That they are *neceſſary to* our *Salvation*; and *Secondly*, That they come from *Chriſt*, or his *Apoſtles*: We can be under no Obligation to receive *them as ſuch*, unleſs they *prove* it. But there is no doubt of what is taught in *theſe Holy Writings*, becauſe we are all *agreed*, that *they come from God*.

Theſe firſt Chriſtians *continued ſtedfaſtly* in the Apoſtles Doctrine: They were aſſiduous Hearers, and attended diligently upon it. They did not *lightly* receive this Doctrine, and upon *truſt*; but uſed great Application of Mind. In-

Act 17. 11. deed *they received the Word with all readiness of Mind*; but then also they *searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.* St. *Peter* in a long Sermon, of which we have but a part here, *convinceth* these men that *Jesus* was *Christ*; and brings *proofs* from the *Written Word.* After this, these men, being throughly convinced of the Truth, *continue stedfast in the Apostle's Doctrine.* Let us be but ascertained that the Doctrine taught is the *Apostles*; and then we are ready to continue in it. We may believe too much as well as too little: Our Credulity may betray us as well as our Diffidence. He is very unreasonable that requires me to believe that to be the *Apostles* Doctrine, which he is not able to prove that they ever *taught*: and there is no way of proving this but by their *Writings*. *Here* can be no danger: If we *leave this* course, I do not see *where* we can be *safe*. It follows

2. And *Fellowship*. I shall shew what this imports.

Some may reckon this no *distinct* Particular, separate from the rest. The *Syriack Version* annexeth it to the *Prayers* and *Eucharist*; and seems to insinuate

nuate that this *Fellowſhip*, or *Communion* is to be underſtood with regard to the *Euchariſt* and *Publick-prayers*. The *Vulgar Latin* ſeems to confine it to the *Euchariſt*: What we render, *and Fellowſhip, and in breaking of Bread*, is by *that Interpreter* rendred by, & *communicatione fractionis panis*, i. e. *the Communion of breaking of Bread:* And then, this *Fellowſhip*, or *Communion* with each other, is to be underſtood of *joyning together* in receiving the *Euchariſt*, and in the *Publick Prayers* of the *Church*. This Senſe is very agreeable to the *Duty* of *Chriſtians*, and to the *Primitive Practice:* And the *Verſion* of the *Vulgar Latin* deſerves here to be regarded: For the *word* we render *Fellowſhip*, ſignifies *Communion*, or *Communication*; and is uſed with relation to the *Sacrament* of the *Euchariſt*. Thus, *the Bread which we break* (in the *Euchariſt*) is called the *Communion*, or *Communication of the Body of Chriſt*. 1 Cor. 10. 16.

But this *Fellowſhip*, if we look into the *Greek Text*, is here to be conſidered *ſeparately* and *apart:* I ſhall therefore conſider the Importance of it in this place. And it ſignifies

First, *Communion* with the *Apostles* and their *fellow Christians*; as that is opposed to *Schism*, and *needless Separation*. They were *obedient* to their *Spiritual Governours*, and did keep in *Communion* with their *Brethren*: from whom (having the same Heart and Soul) they did not withdraw in the solemn times of God's *publick worship*. There was a *mark*, in those early times of Christianity, set upon those who *separated* and *withdrew*; and strict charge upon Christians, to *obey* their *Instructors*, and preserve *Unity* among themselves. Or,

Phil. 4. 15. *Secondly*, Mutual Assistance, which they gave and received; or an interchange of kind Offices and Helps between each other. Such are the relieving the Poor, instructing the more Ignorant, comforting and supporting the Sorrowful and Weak. In this the first Christians were very exemplary; and 'twas the *note* by which they were known and observed. And the more *Apostolical* any Church is, the more

Act. 11. 29. 2 Cor. 8. 14. *Charitable*. The first Christians *did by Love serve one another*. They parted

Gal. 5. 13. with their *Possessions*, for the help of the

v. 45. Poor and Needy.

3. And

3. And *in breaking of Bread*; i. e. receiving the *Euchariſt*, as the *Syriac Verſion* gives us to underſtand. Here's *another note* of the *Church*, viz. the *partaking* of the *Sacraments*. *Baptiſm* is mentioned above, *v.* 41. and *here*, that of the *Lord's Supper*, expreſſed by *breaking of Bread*, as it is elſewhere; where yet it is *not* ſo much as *inſinuated*, that 'tis *enough* to receive it under *one kind*. For when St. *Paul*, *after* this, expreſſeth this by *breaking of Bread*, he does in the *ſame place* mention, *the Cup of Bleſſing*. 1 Cor. 10. 16.

This I obſerve by the way, againſt a *late Author*, who pretends that *Chriſt* left it as a thing indifferent, whether we receive the *Sacrament* under *both*, or *one kind* only. This he pretends to be evident from his *own words*, in that he attributes the obtaining Life everlaſting, ſometimes to the receiving under *both* kinds, ſometimes under *one*. And to this purpoſe he quotes theſe words, *If any man eat of this Bread he ſhall live for ever*. But to this I *anſwer*, Thoſe words in that Chapter *belong* to the *Sacrament*, or they do *not*: If *not* (as 'tis probable they do *not*, the *Sacrament* not being inſtituted till afterwards) they *belong not* to *this* matter: If they *do*, we ought to Joh. 6. 51.

receive under *both kinds*; becauſe *Jeſus* says, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Except ye eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no life in you: Whoſo eateth my Fleſh, and drinketh my Blood, hath Eternal Life: and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day. For my Fleſh is meat indeed, and my Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my Fleſh and drinketh my Blood dwelleth in me and I in him.* Theſe words are plain enough; and therefore we have reaſon to believe, that when *Bread* is mentioned *alone*, the *part* is put for the *whole*; ſince *Jeſus* makes the *Blood*, as neceſſary as the *Fleſh*, or *Bread*.

v. 53, 54, 55, 56.

The *right uſe* of the *Sacraments* was, in the *beginning*, and therefore *now*, a good *Character* and *Token* of a *Chriſtian Church*. *Both* Sacraments are mentioned *here*, and *v.* 41. By *one* we are *admitted* into *Chriſt's Church*, by the *other* we receive *nouriſhment* and *growth*; *united* to *Chriſt* by *both*.

For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body— and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. By *Baptiſm* we are made *Members* of *the Body* of *Chriſt*, and by the *Euchariſt* we partake of the *ſame Spirit*. For the *drinking* here is put for

1 Cor. 12. 13.

for the *Euchariſt*, a *part* for the *whole*; which does not diſcharge us from the *breaking of Bread.*

The *Sacraments* of *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's Supper* were *both* inſtituted by *Chriſt*, and to *continue* in the Church; and are to be *obſerved* as *he* hath *directed.*

For *Baptiſm*, our *Lord* appointed it for the *receiving* Members *into* his Church: Thus it was ordained by him and thus uſed by the Apoſtles. *Go ye and teach* (μαθητεύσατε) *i. e.* diſciple, or receive into the Church, *all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father*, &c. Thus was it uſed by the Apoſtles and firſt Preachers. *They that gladly received his Word were baptized: and the ſame day there were added unto them about three thouſand Souls*, v. 41. Mat. 28. 19. Act. 8. 12. 10. 48. 16. 33.

And for the *Sacrament* of the *Lord's Supper*, *Chriſt gave* it *himſelf*, and *appointed* the *uſe* of it: *He took Bread and brake it*, &c. *He took alſo the Cup; he ſaid, Drink ye all:* To this Practice St. *Paul* refers his *Corinthians.* 'Tis *Bread* ſtill in its natural Subſtance: 'tis called ſo *after* its *Conſecration* by St. *Paul*, ſeveral times, What we *break*, what we *eat* is *Bread.* 'Twas *Wine* too *after Conſecration:*

Consecration: Jesus then called it the *Fruit of the Vine.* He *bid* them *all drink*, and they *did all drink*, and *we*
1 Cor. 12. *are all made to drink*, &c. *Both kinds*
13. *were given, both received, both required* by the *Apostle* in several Verses toge-
1 Cor. 11. ther. The *Law* was to *continue for e-*
26. *ver*; and must *continue as Christ left it.* Thus it was in the *Ancient Church*: They received in *both kinds*; and *kept* to the *Rule* which they received from *Christ.*

The partaking of these *Sacraments* according to *Christ's Institution* may well pass for a *Note* of the true *Church*, because the *Sacraments* themselves are a *mark* and *badge* of *Christians*; and indeed of *Christianity. Baptism* was indeed used among the *Jews*, before *Christ* adopted it into a *Christian Sacrament*: But then, when our *Saviour* required it, and to be done *in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, and as a *Sacrament* of *Initiation* into *his Church*, it became the *peculiar badge* of *Christians*, and *distinguished them* from those of *other* Religions. And the *Eucharist* being the *Commemoration* of *Christ's Death* and *Sufferings*, is so *too.* 'Tis the *Badge* and *Symbol* of a *Christian.* And as *he* hath no

no right to the *Name* of a *Christian*, who is *not baptized*; so *he* who lives in a neglect of the *Lord's Supper*, lives in a *Contradiction* to that *Holy Name*.

4. And *Prayers*. By *Prayers* are meant the *publick* and *solemn Prayers* of the *Apostles* and *Governours* of the *Church*. *Jesus* had *taught them* to *pray*, and given them a *Prayer* of his *own*. And the *Apostles* had now *received* the *Holy Spirit*, and *prayed with* the *Faithful*. These Assemblies the *first Christians* departed not from. The *Prayers* of the *Church* are by no means to be *neglected*. They are a great part of *Religious Worship*. And where these *Prayers* are agreeable to *God's will*, we can never *neglect* them without just imputation of *Prophaneness*. 'Tis not enough that we pray in *private*, we must joyn in *publick* too. And we are very unlike the *First* and *Apostolical Christians* when we contemn this Service of God. We find the *Apostles* at certain *stated* times resorting to the *Temple* for this purpose; and very much in practising and pressing this Christian Duty.

And thus I have gone over the *Four Particulars* in my Text, which were the *Marks* and *Notes* of the *Primitive Church*.

Bellarmin

Bellarmin hath taken great pains to acquaint us with the *Notes* of the *true Church*; and all to perſwade us, That the *Church of Rome* is the only *Catholick* one. *Some* of his *Notes* deſerve not that *Name*; and the *reſt* are far from proving what they are produced for; and *all* of them have of late been conſidered. But here are *Notes* in my *Text* of a *Primitive* and *Apoſtolical Church* that are *unexceptionable*.

II. I ſhall examine our *own Church* by them: We are well contented to be tryed by theſe *Notes* of the *Mother Church*: For ſo the *Church of Jeruſalem* is in truth, whatever Pretenſions *that of Rome* may make.

1. That Church which *continues ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine* is ſo far *Apoſtolick* and *Primitive*. What their *Doctrine* is may beſt be learned from their *Writings*: He that would prove any thing to be their Doctrine muſt do it this way: And thus the *Ancient Fathers* did. And here we are upon ſure grounds.

Our Church receives whatever *Chriſt* or his *Apoſtles* taught; and cannot be charged on this account of innovating or altering what *they* delivered to be *of Faith*.

Faith. We own *their Writings*, and the *Ancient* and *First Creeds:* and here we ſtand, and hope to continue ſtedfaſt.

That Church which chargeth *us* with *Hereſie*, cannot prove her *own Doctrines* to be *Apoſtolical*. The *Juriſdiction* and *pretended Infallibility* of the *Biſhop of Rome*, and his *claim* from St. *Peter*, are no where taught in theſe Writings, nor inſinuated in the *Creeds* of the *Ancient Church*. We have no mention there that St. *Peter* was ever at *Rome*; and no ſhadow of reaſon to believe the *Biſhop* of *that Church* an *Univerſal Monarch* over the *Chriſtian World*. The Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, of the *Sacrifice of the Maſs*, are never to be proved from the *Writings* of the *Apoſtles:* And ſome of the *Church of Rome* have owned this; and yet are theſe things of ſo great *moment*, that we had need be very ſure they are the *Doctrine* of the *Apoſtles*, before we can be obliged to receive them.

Many things obtain in *that Church*, which are ſo far from being the *Doctrine* of the *Apoſtles*, that they *contradict* the *Doctrine* which *they* delivered. 'Twere not hard to give *many Inſtances:* I ſhall mention *ſome*.

Our

Matt. 26. 27. Mark 14. 23. 1 Cor. 12. 13. 10. 16. 11. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

Our *Saviour* said when he gave the Cup, *Drink ye all of it.* St. *Mark* says, *And they all drank of it:* St. *Paul* says, *We have all been made to drink into one Spirit.* Elsewhere he mentions the *Cup of Blessing*, as being the *Communion of the Blood of Christ*, and that *where*, and *before*, he mentions *the Bread which we break:* And when he reduceth the *Corinthians* to *Christ's Institution*, he makes particular mention of the *Cup.* And *four times* together he mentions the *Cup* as well as the *Bread. Thus* the *Apostle* speaks, *this* he requires, *thus* the *Primitive Christians* practised; but after all the *Church of* Rome *denys* the *Cup* to the *People.* Is this to *continue stedfast in the Apostles Doctrine?*

Joh. 5. 39. Act. 17. 11. Col. 3. 16. 2 Tim. 3. 15. Luk. 16. 31.

Our *Saviour* says expresly, *Search the Scriptures:* The *Bereans* are commended for it: The *Apostle* says, *Let the Word of God dwell in you richly*; and elsewhere he tells *Timothy*, That they *are able to make him wise unto Salvation:* 'Tis to the *Scriptures* the *miserable man's Brethren* are referred; and to them the *Fathers*, not only appeal, but exhort the People to apply themselves; and *our Church* owns them as the *Rule of Faith and Manners:* and yet the *Roman Church denys*

denys them to the *People.* Is this to *continue ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine?*

Our *Saviour* ſays, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* Mat. 4. 10. And St. *Paul* condemns the *worſhipping of Angels,* as a ſign of a *fleſhly Mind, vainly puft up.* Col. 2. 18. And the Angel refuſeth it; ſaying to St. *John, See thou do it not.* Rev. 19. 10. 22. 9. And St. *Paul* ſays, *There is one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Chriſt Jeſus.* 1 Tim. 2. 5. And yet the *worſhip of Angels,* and *Prayers to Saints as Interceſſors,* is required and practiſed in the *Church of Rome.* Do theſe Men *continue ſtedfaſt in the Apoſtles Doctrine?*

Can any thing be more plain, than that the *Publick Worſhip* of *God* ought to be in a *Tongue vulgarly underſtood?* This the *Apoſtle* teacheth; *He that ſpeaketh in an unknown tongue, ſpeaketh not unto Men, but unto God.* 1 Cor. 14. 2, 11, 16. Again, *If I know not the meaning of the Voice, I ſhall be unto him that ſpeaketh a Barbarian, and he that ſpeaketh ſhall be a Barbarian unto me:* And, *when thou ſhalt bleſs with the Spirit, how ſhall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, ſay,* Amen, *at thy giving of thanks, ſeeing he underſtandeth not what thou ſayeſt?* And yet the *Church*

of

of Rome ordains, that *their Service* ſhall be celebrated in the *Latin* Tongue. And *Pope Alexander* declared, That the *Maſs-book* turn'd into *French* was a Seed-plot of *Diſobedience*, *Raſhneſs* and *Schiſm.* Is this to *continue ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine?*

For the *Worſhip* and *Reverence* paid to the *Virgin Mary* in the *Church of Rome*, we cannot but be amazed at it. For tho' we *honour* her *Memory*, as the *Mother of Jeſus*, and *Servant of God*, yet that *Worſhip* paid in the *Roman Church* we *cannot allow* of. And I am ſure 'tis ſo far from being grounded upon the *Apoſtles Doctrine*, that we do not find her ſo much as *named* in all their *Writings.* So *far* are we from reading of her *Aſſumption* and *Exaltation!* The ſame may be ſaid as to the *worſhip of Images*, and *veneration of Relicks*, and *number of their Sacraments:* they will never be able to prove them the *Apoſtles Doctrine.*

Heb. 13. 4. 1 Tim. 3. 1, 12. ch. 4. 3. Our *Saviour* allows of *Marriage*; and the *Apoſtle* affirms it to be *Honourable in all*; and allows a *Biſhop* to be *the Husband of one Wife*, and *Deacons* to be *married men*, and remarks ſeverely upon thoſe who *forbid to marry:* and yet we know this is forbidden to that *whole*

Order

Order of men by the *Church of Rome.* Is this *continuing ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine?*

The *Apoſtle* ſays of *Chriſt*, That *by one Offering he hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified.* And that, *where there is remiſſion of ſins, there is no more offering for ſin:* And that *without ſhedding of Blood there is no remiſſion:* And that *Chriſt was once offered to bear the ſins of many:* And that by *his own Blood he entred in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us.* And yet the *Church of Rome* tells us, that the *Sacrifice of the Maſs* (tho' an *unbloody Sacrifice*) is yet a *proper Sacrifice*, and *propitiatory* for the *ſins* of the *quick and the dead.* Is this *continuing ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine?* Heb 10. 14, 18. Heb 9. 22. 9. 24. 9. 12.

Our Church is *ſtedfaſt* in *this Doctrine of the Apoſtles*; receives their *Writings* and their *Creed*, and the *Belief* of the *firſt* and *beſt Chriſtians*; and hath *this mark* of the *Primitive* and *Apoſtolical* Church: and therefore is not to be *decryed* as *Heretical*, nor *ſeparated* from as an *unſound Member* of the *Catholick Church.*

2. *And Fellowſhip. Our Church* hath alſo *this Note* of a *Primitive Church.*

First, As *Fellowship* is oppoſed to *Schiſm*, and *needleſs Separation* from the *Paſtors* of the *Church ſucceeding* to *the Apoſtles*, and the *reſt* of our *Fellow Chriſtians*. Here's *no juſt Charge* can lie againſt *our Church* in this matter. I know *who* have *charged* us with it; but without ground: For we depart not from *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*. *Thoſe* that put upon us *Terms* that we cannot *lawfully* ſubmit to are *guilty*, and not *we* who depart only from the *Errors* of the *Church*. 'Tis the *Cauſe* that makes the *Schiſm*, as well as the *Martyr*. Thoſe things were practiſed, required and taught in the *Roman Church*, which we could not lawfully come up to. And now 'tis come to a *new Creed*, and *Pius the Fourth* requires the *belief* of *new Articles*, unknown to the *Ancient Church*; ſuch as theſe, *That the Church of* Rome *is the Mother and Miſtreſs of all Churches*; *That the* Roman *Biſhop is the Succeſſour of* Peter, *Prince of the Apoſtles*, *Vicar of Jeſus Chriſt*: Beſide the *whole Doctrine* of the *Trent Council*. Here are *new Articles of Faith* obtruded, which are *no part* of the *Apoſtles Doctrine*. There could be *no ſuch Doctrine* as this required of *theſe firſt Chriſtians* in my *Text*, to

to be profeſſed: And 'tis expreſsly a-
gainſt a *Canon* of the *Council* of *Epheſus* Can. VII.
to write or compoſe any other *Faith* than what was defined by the *Fathers* of the *Nicene Council.*

We are to *communicate* with *all Chriſtians* that *continue in the Apoſtles Doctrine.* Thoſe who teach *another Faith*, and uſurp a *Juriſdiction* not belonging to them, and *exclude* thoſe who ſubmit not, have no cauſe to call their Brethren *Schiſmaticks:* The Sin will lie at their *own* Door.

Secondly, As *Fellowſhip* ſignifies *Aſſiſtance* and *merciful Help*, 'tis a *Note* belonging to *our Church.* We *teach* the *neceſſity of good Works*, and we *practice* what we *teach.* I do not ſee that *we* are ſhort in *this* of the *Roman Church:* and ſure I am, that our *Principles* from whence we preſs this are *better*; and ſo are alſo the *Works* themſelves.

3. For the *Sacraments*, we agree with the *Catholicks* in my *Text.* They were *Baptized*, and received the *Euchariſt.* Theſe *two Sacraments we* receive, as *they* did. *Theſe* were *inſtituted* by *Jeſus Chriſt*, and *by the Ancient Church received.*

The *Church of Rome* makes *Seven*; and for what I ſee, might with as good reaſon make *Twenty*. The *Scripture* does not ſo much as *inſinuate this number*; but is *expreſs* in that of *Baptiſm*, and the *Euchariſt*. And for above a *thouſand Years* after *Chriſt*, the *Church* never declared *this number of Sacraments*: Perhaps we ſhall not find the *number defin'd* before the days of *Peter Lombard*. But the *Council of Trent* pronounceth an *Anathema* againſt *thoſe who deny their Seven inſtituted by Jeſus Chriſt*.

1 Cor. 10. 2, 3, 4. 12. 13.

Seſſ. VII. Can. I.

And for the *Euchariſt*, expreſſed by *breaking of Bread*, *our Church* obſerves our *Saviour's Example* and *Law*. But things are ſo ordered in *their Church*, that there is neither *Bread*, nor *breaking*, no nor *Communion* neither, in their *private Maſſes*: no nor *Sacrament*; for by *their Doctrine* the *Symbols* are *turn'd* into the *natural Body and Blood of Chriſt*.

They take away the *Cup*: And depart therein from the *Example* and *Precept* of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

For *Baptiſm*, *we receive* it as *delivered*; and *baptize in the Name of the Father*, &c. The *Church of Rome* makes uſe of *Oyl*, *Exorciſm*, *Croſſes* upon the *Eyes* and *Breaſts*, *Salt* that hath been *exorciſed*

orciſed put into the *Mouth*, *Spittle* to anoint the *Ears* and *Noſe*, &c. But this is not all: *That Church does Anathematize* them that *contemn thoſe Rites*, or *affirm* they may be *omitted without ſin.* Conc. Trid. Seſſ. VII. Can. 13.

I will not purſue the *Doctrine* of *that Church* about the *Sacraments*; That of the *Intention of the Prieſt*, and of the *Sacraments conferring Grace ex opere operato.* 'Tis enough that *we* keep cloſe to the *Primitive Church* when we *receive two Sacraments*; nor will we reject their *other five*, when they prove them *inſtituted by Jeſus Chriſt:* In the mean time we agree with the *firſt* and *beſt Chriſtians.* Can. 11. 8.

4. *And Prayers.* This is another *Note*; and a great part of the *Worſhip* of *God.* Here's no mention of the *Sacrifice of the Maſs*, which is a *principal* part of *Worſhip* in the *Roman Church*; nor of *Prayers* for them that are in *Purgatory*, nor to *Saints and Angels*, or the *Bleſſed Virgin:* Nor is any ſuch thing to be found in any of the *Apoſtles Writings*, or in any part of the *Sacred Writ.*

Our Church hath appointed *publick Prayers:* The *matter* of them is agreeable to the *Apoſtles Doctrine*; they are all *directed* to *God*, *by Jeſus Chriſt:* and

they are in a *Language* commonly *underſtood*. This is enough to *juſtifie them*. But thoſe of the *Roman Church* are not ſo. *Beſides* that many of them are directed to *Saints* or *Angels*, their *publick Service* is in *Latin*. Let any indifferent man judge *which Church* comes neareſt to the *Primitive* Pattern.

III. I ſhall make ſome *Application* of what hath been ſaid.

1. We may be hence exhorted to be *ſtedfaſt* to *our Church*, which hath been ſo in the *Apoſtles Doctrine*. We ſhall not (if we conſider) be eaſily tempted from *her Communion*. We leave them that have forſaken us to the *Righteous Judge*. The popular pretences from *Antiquity*, *Authority of the Fathers*, *Safety of their Communion*, and from *our own Charitable Opinion*, have nothing in them ſolid. We are *ſure* of the *Apoſtles Doctrine*: And *our Church* holds to *that*, and to *ancient Creeds*, and *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*. Let us not be drawn aſide by *Sophiſtry*; nor ſuppoſe, that becauſe we ſtand *ſeparated* from the *Roman Church*, we muſt therefore be *Schiſmaticks*. The *Roman Church* is not the *Catholick*; 'tis, at moſt, but a *part* of it.

That

That ſhe is a *true Church* does not ſpeak *us* guilty of *Schiſm:* Becauſe we only depart from *Error* and *Pravity*; and do not deny a *Metaphyſical Truth*, where we allow not a *Moral* one. We were never under the *Authority*, never liable to the *Juriſdiction* of the *Roman Biſhop:* What was *uſurped*, was *precarious*, and not *unalterable.*

Here's nothing wanting in *our Church*, where we have the *Apoſtles Doctrine*, the *Primitive Government*, a *due Succeſſion of Paſtors*, an *adherence* to the *ancient Doctrine of the Church:* We are *ſure* of the *Sacraments* that *Jeſus Chriſt ordained*; and we *worſhip God* in a *known Tongue.* We keep not the *Scriptures* from the *People*, for fear of *diſcovery*; nor put out *Catechiſms* without the *ſecond Commandment.*

We are ſafe in *this Church*; and have no reaſon to leave it, to go to the *Roman.*

2 Let us preſerve, as much as we can, *Communion* among *our ſelves:* We have great cauſe to comply with this Exhortation, becauſe 'tis equally our *Duty* and our *Intereſt.* Whiles *this Church continues in the Apoſtles Doctrine*, &c. we are obliged to hold *Communion with her*;

and 'tis always our ſecureſt courſe to *keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace.* The beſt way of *preſerving* this *Unity* will be

Act. 4. 32. *Firſt*, The *Bond of Charity.* This is
Col. 3. 14. called, the *Bond of Perfectneſs.* This
Col. 2. 2. *knits us together.* Thus the *firſt Chriſtians* were of *one Heart*, and *Soul.* Our
Joh. 17, 23. *Saviour* prayed that they *might be made*
1 Pet. 4. 8. *perfect in one. Above all things have perfect Charity among your ſelves.* This is the *mark* and *badge* of *Chriſtians*, and the great *inſtrument* or *bond* of *Unity.* Our Religion teaches us to *love* our *Enemies:* and will not ſuffer us to want *Love* among *our ſelves.*

Eph. 4. 3. *Secondly*, The *Bond of Peace; endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit*
1 Cor. 1. 10. *in the bond of Peace. Now I beſeech you, Brethren, by the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no Diviſions among you; but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the ſame Mind, and in the ſame Judg-*
Phil. 2. 1, 2, 3. *ment.* Again, *If there be therefore, any Conſolation in Chriſt, if any Comfort of Love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies, fulfil ye my Joy; that ye be like minded, having the ſame love, being of one accord, of one mind:*

Let

Let nothing be done through ſtrife, or vain-glory.— We muſt *ſeek Peace and enſue it.* We muſt *bear with one another, avoid*, as much as lies in us, all *occaſions* of *ſtrife* and *debate*, be *gentle* towards thoſe who in ſome things *differ* from us. In a word, we muſt be always applying our ſelves to the *things that make for Peace, and the things by which we may edifie one another.*

Thirdly, We may hence be exhorted to *live up to* the *Apoſtolical Principles*, which we make *profeſſion* of. To be as *primitive* in our *Lives* as we are in our *Doctrine.*

Nothing imports and boads ſo much *Evil* to us, as our *evil Lives.* Our *Principles* are good; I wiſh I could ſay ſo of our *Practices* too. Our *Zeal* againſt the *Errors* of *others*, will not excuſe us for *not obeying* the *Truth.* Let's conſider what advantage we receive from a good Religion. What tho' we have our *Bibles*, if we do not *meditate in them Day and Night*, and *conform* our *Lives* to them: We have the *Sacrament* in *both kinds*, and *neglect* to *receive* it; our *Prayers* in the *Vulgar Tongue*, and *forbear* to *frequent* them. We pray not to *Saints* or *Angels*; but do we pray to *God?*

God? We worſhip no *Idol*; but do we with Care and Reverence worſhip *God*? We *receive* no *new Articles*; but do we *believe* the *old?* What effect have they on our *Lives?* Our *good Principles*, if our *Lives* be not agreeable, will but enhance our *Condemnation*. Our *ſins* will be our ruin, whatever our *Faith* or *Church* be. There was never more *need* of this Exhortation than now. If we fear our *Common Enemy*, what wiſer courſe than to make *God our Friend*, and to put our ſelves under *his Protection*? That which I would perſwade you to, is,

Firſt, An *holy Life*, i. e. *Univerſal Obedience* to the *Divine Laws* and our *Holy Religion*. Here's nothing in *our Doctrine* that *obſtructs*, but all things tend to *promote* it. We open no Back-door to let *falſe People* into *Heaven*.— We require a ſpeedy and particular *Repentance*, we give no *Indulgences* or *Diſpenſations* from an *holy Life*. We open no gap to the *Prophane* to get *out at*: On the other hand, we put men upon *Piety* and *Juſtice*, upon *Temperance* and *Humility*, upon *mortifying their Luſts*, *contempt of the World*, and *aſpiring after Heaven*. In a word, 'tis fitted to make men *wiſe* and *good*: The more you

you *practice* it the more you will be *confirmed* in it.

Secondly, To a carefull *uſe* of the *Means of Religion*: Such as examining your ſelves, reading and hearing the *Holy Scriptures*, the Publick Prayers and Worſhip of *God*, frequent receiving the *Holy Sacrament*, conſulting your Spiritual *Paſtors* and *Guides*. And not barely doing theſe things and *reſting* there, but *advancing* by them to a *Spiritual Life*.

Thirdly, Fervent and earneſt *Prayer to God* for Inſtruction and Help, for Perſeverance and Stedfaſtneſs, for Wiſdom and Courage. This will certainly bring down Aid and Aſſiſtance.

If we take this courſe we ſhall never fall. Nor ſhall we need to fear the *Powers of Darkneſs*, and *Gates of Hell*. We ſhall be provided againſt *Sophiſtry* and *Artifice*; armed againſt the *Menaces* and *Blandiſhments* of the *World*. And *our Church* will ſtand firm as a *Rock*, unſhaken by the moſt violent *Storms* and *Tempeſts*.

Adorn your *Religion*, and you'll *ſecure* it. Our *Writings* are of *ſome uſe*; but *this* of the *greateſt*. Every man cannot *diſpute*; but he may *pray* and *live*

live well. *God's Grace* will not be wanting to our *ſincere Endeavours.* Thus we ſhall *defend our Religion,* and beſt *ſilence our Adverſaries*; and *our Church* will be *preſerved.* And *that it may, God of his mercy grant, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt.*

Amen.

The

The Judgment of

Private Diſcretion

IN

Matters of Religion

DEFENDED;

IN A

SERMON

On 1 *Theſſal.* V. 21.

PREFACE
TO
SERMON TENTH.

NOthing *concerns us ſo much as the Salvation of our Souls, and, in order to that, the choice of our Religion. Here it well becomes us to uſe great care, and ſtrictly to examine things. This we do in matters of leſs moment; when we purchaſe, and when we trade; when we are concerned for our Health, our Eſtates, and Properties. The H. Scriptures frequently puts us upon this care; and the man who is diligent herein will be able to give the beſt account of himſelf* hereafter, *and find the greateſt ſatisfaction* here: *Such a man will have ſteady Principles, and have this comfort, that 'tis not by meer* chance, *but* choice, *that he is what he is. This is the way to be certain that we are in the right, which no man can be without underſtanding. We*

may

may be confident *indeed, but can never be* certain, *without knowledge and diligent examination of things.*

The Church of England *does not require a blind Obedience; She is content Her Doctrines ſhould be examined by the cleareſt light. Simplicity and Truth ſeek not corners. The H. Scriptures are allowed to the people, and no means of inſtruction wanting among us. She does not indeed vaunt of what ſhe hath not: She pretends not to any abſolute Infallibility. She is modeſt, and contains Herſelf within due bounds, and with-holds not from Her Children either the liberty or means of examining Her Doctrines.*

But ſo it is, that She ſuffers very greatly in the mean time: Becauſe She claims not Infallibility, *there are thoſe would infer that there is no* certainty *where the other is not. But this is a wild and extravagant concluſion; for the* certainty *of a* Thing *does not depend upon the* infallibility *of a* Perſon, *but ariſeth from the* evidence *or clear grounds which evince its truth. It does not follow that becauſe I am* fallible *I can be certain of nothing; or that becauſe I am liable to err, I can never be ſure I am in the right; or that becauſe I am ignorant of ſome things therefore I know nothing at all.* And

And yet we find it frequently pretended that Proteſtants *want certainty, and that they build upon an unſure foundation; and* that *becauſe they claim not that infallibility which others pretend to. The beſt way to ſhew the uncertainty of our Faith would be to prove, that we build on falſe grounds; but thoſe men who are moſt forward to traduce us, have no great inclination to conſider with due application the merits of our cauſe. Inſtead of this, they would have us reſt upon the Authority of their Church: as if the way to be more certain than we are, were for us to ſee with other mens eyes, and not with our own.*

A man might juſtly expect from theſe men, who thus declaim againſt Proteſtants, *that when they attempt to ſhew the uncertainty of* their Faith, *they ſhould at leaſt prove the certainty of* their own. *'Twill be worth our while to ſee if they have any better grounds for their Faith, or ſafer way to Salvation, than we have, who examine our Doctrines by the H. Scriptures. The beſt way to know this, will be to compare them one with another.*

They ſay that the definition *of the* Church *is our Rule: where, before we can be certain, we muſt be ſure of two things,* [1.] *That there is an infallible Church.*

Cl. Pajon Examen du livre qui porte pour titre Préjugez Legitimes, part. 11.

[2.] *That their Church is that infallible Church. We on the other hand make the H. Scriptures our Rule, and believe what they teach; and here are two things alſo of which we muſt be ſure.* [1.] *That what God ſays is true.* [2.] *That what the Scriptures reveal is from God. This is the true ſtate of the queſtion between us. And now let any man conſider impartially who builds upon the ſureſt Grounds. They who build upon the Veracity of God, and upon the H. Scriptures, which are by all Chriſtians owned to be the declaration of his Will; or they who build upon a pretence that there is an infallible Church, and that their own is it. The Principles on which they build are neither ſo evident in themſelves, nor yet ſo generally owned as ours: for* theirs *are not ſo much as owned by the generality of Chriſtians, whereas* ours *cannot be denied by themſelves. And 'twill appear that our way is as* Eaſie, *and more* Safe *than theirs.*

'Tis as eaſie *to know what the* Scripture *teaches as what* their Church *does: God intended it for the uſe of the people; and ſurely then he fitted it for their uſe. And we have great reaſon to believe that* God *can deliver his mind as plainly as a* Council, *and that he did it in all things neceſſary*

ſary to the guidance and ſalvation of the people for whom he wrote it. This is ſo very evident, that ſome of the Church *of* Rome *have owned it. The Authors of the* Preface *to the Teſtament printed at* Mons *declare,* That he who in the Scripture ſeeks nothing but his own Salvation, ſhall find it there. *And preſently afterwards, ſpeaking of ſome obſcurity in the Scripture, they add theſe words:* But that which may comfort us in this obſcurity is this, that, according to St. *Auguſtin,* the H. Scripture does propoſe to us after an eaſie and intelligible manner all that is neceſſary for the conduct of our life; That it does explain and clear it ſelf, in expreſſing clearly in ſome places that which in others is expreſſed obſcurely.

Pref. part 1. *pag.* 7. Celuy qui ne cherche dans l'Ecriture que ſon ſalut, l'y trouvera.

For the Doctrine *of the* Church, *'tis not very eaſie to know it. We find at this day ſeveral repreſentations of it from thoſe who are all of the Communion of the* Roman Church. *How ſhall the ſimple and unlearned man know what this Doctrine is? His Curate may not be rely'd upon, nor can he be ſecure from the judgment of any private Doctor. What muſt he doe? How ſhall he diſtinguiſh between the Doctrine of private Doctors, and that*

of the Church? Muſt he read the ancient Canons, and Councils, and Fathers? He'll find this an harder task than the ſearching of the Scriptures. As our way is as eaſie, *ſo 'tis*

More ſafe *than theirs. There is danger indeed leſt our luſts and worldly intereſts ſhould put a byaſs upon us, and turn us aſide from the Truth; but this lies on both ſides: But then on our ſide the great danger is this, leſt we miſtake the ſenſe of the H. Scripture; here's the great fear. Whereas on the other ſide, they who govern themſelves by the authority of the Church are under a double danger;* [1.] *Leſt they take that Church for infallible which is not.* [2.] *Leſt they take that for the Doctrine of this Church, which indeed is not her Doctrine. We are ſure that the Scriptures are God's Word, and were written for our inſtruction, and that upon our diligent ſearch into them, and humble addreſſes to God, we ſhall* find Salvation, if we ſeek nothing more.

For the infallibility *of the* Church, *which is ſo much talked of, it muſt be made good before I can be obliged to receive it; and when 'tis I ſhall readily ſubmit to it. But in the mean time I find great difficulties attending upon that*

that Doctrine, both as to the Subject *of that* Infallibility, *as to the Thing* it ſelf, *and as to the* Grounds *on which it ſtands.*

As to the Subject *of it, I find our Adverſaries are not as yet agreed where it is to be placed, and therefore I know not where to find it; and then 'tis all one as if there were no ſuch thing at all. That which I cannot come at, will ſtand me in no ſtead. Let our Adverſaries tell us in whom 'tis lodged: Is it in the Biſhop of* Rome? *Or is it in Him and the Conclave? Or in Him and a General Council? Or is it in a Council without Him? If in a Council, muſt that be* OEcumenical *only; or does it reſide in National and Provincial alſo?*

As to the Infallibility *it ſelf, I would be informed how far it reacheth. Does it extend to queſtions of* Fact *as well as of* Law *and* Right? *Does it take in not only* neceſſary *things, but alſo things that are of* leſs moment? *Is this Church infallible not only in her* Concluſions, *but in the* premiſſes *too from whence thoſe Concluſions are drawn? Does this Infallibility require that the queſtion ſhould be examin'd before the matter be decided or not? Is it a* natural gift, *or is it by* Grace? *By immediate Revelation, or not? Let us*

ſuppoſe it in a General Council; yet in this caſe I would know, whether or not this Council will be infallible in their deciſions however things are carried? Are there no Rules the Council is to go by? Muſt not queſtions be ſtrictly examined, and the ſuffrages be free, and the Council be Canonically indicted? Or will the Council be infallible tho' it obſerve none of theſe rules and forms? Let them tell us what theſe forms are that are neceſſary, and let them after this make it appear that they have been duly obſerved; or let them ſay if any form or rule be needfull, or not. How comes it to paſs that the Divines in a General Council have differed from one another? How comes it that one Council hath determined againſt another? Why are ſome of theſe Councils in part received, and in part rejected? What ſure marks have we to diſtinguiſh one from another? What aſſurance can they give that the major part is always the better, and have uſed the greateſt care?

For the Grounds *and proofs of this Infallibility I deſire to ſee thoſe that are ſolid and weighty, ſuch as are evident and clear, and will render me infallibly certain of the thing. This had need be well proved, it not being ſelf-evident.*

If

If I must believe the Church in all things, yet 'tis fit this *should be strongly proved. These proofs must be taken from the H. Scriptures, and not from the authority of the Church which lays claim to it. And then they must be such proofs as determine it to that very Church, and as do evidently prove that such an Infallibility does belong to it as she pretends to.*

Till these things are cleared, I know not any better advice I can give the Reader, than to continue stedfast in the Communion of our Church, as the safest way to Heaven. For tho' we ought not to want charity for others, yet we are bound in conscience (and as we will answer it at the great Day) to choose wisely, and to be constant to such a choice. There are some things controverted between Us and the Church of Rome *wherein we are manifestly of the safer side: To* worship no Image *hath no danger, nor is there any hazard in* receiving the Sacrament in both kinds. *'Twere easie to give other instances in which we are on the safer side.*

In the mean time, let it be our care to live up to our Principles, and we shall not miscarry. The best Church is no se-

curity to the careleſs and profane. We ſhall know the Will of God beſt, when we doe it with great care. 'Tis not enough that we prove all things, *we muſt alſo* hold faſt that which is good.

SER-

SERMON X.

Preached at

St. *Paul's Covent-Garden*,

February 23. 1681.

1 THESSAL. V. 21

Prove all things, hold faſt that which is good.

IN theſe words the Apoſtle commends to thoſe to whom he writes, two things, the one in order to the other.

Firſt, *That they ſhould prove all things.*
Secondly, *That they ſhould hold faſt that which is good.*

I begin with the firſt, *Prove all things.*

And here I think my ſelf obliged, before I proceed any farther, to conſider [1.] The Perſons to whom the advice is

is given; And [2.] The importance of the advice it ſelf.

1. The Perſons to whom this advice is
Ch. 1. v. 1. given; viz. *To the Church of the Theſſalonians.* Not to the Biſhops and Governours of the Church only, but to the People alſo. This appears from the words (v. 12.) *We beſeech you brethren to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord and admoniſh you.* It cannot be ſuppoſed that St. *Paul* does here direct himſelf to the head and not unto the members. He does generally addreſs himſelf to the Church in the moſt diffuſive ſenſe of
Rom. 1. 7. that word; *E. G. To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be Saints.* And,
1 Cor. 1. 2. 2 Cor. 1. 1. *Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, called to be Saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jeſus Chriſt the Lord.* Again, *Unto the Church of God which is in Corinth, with all the Saints which are in all Achaia.*
Gal. 1. 2. Again, *Unto the Church of Galatia*; And,
Eph. 1. 1. *To the Saints which are at Epheſus, and to the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus.* And where the Biſhops and other Miniſters of the Church are named, the body of the faithfull are not forgotten. Thus,

To

To all the Saints in Chriſt Jeſus which are at Philippi, with the Biſhops and Deacons. Again, *To the Saints and faithfull brethren in Chriſt which are at Coloſſe.* And, *To the Church of the Theſſalonians.* And thus alſo St. *James*, *To the twelve Tribes ſcattered abroad.* Thus St. *Peter*, *To the ſtrangers ſcattered*, &c. And, *To them that have obtained like pretious faith with us.* And St. *John* (as a learned man hath obſerved) may well be ſuppoſed to direct *that Epiſtle* to the Church, or whole body of Chriſtians, which according to our verſion is ſaid to be directed to the *Elect Lady*. St. *Jude* directs his *To them that are ſanctified by God the Father, and preſerved in Jeſus Chriſt and called.* St. *Paul* where he gives Laws about the Officers and Government of the Church directs his Epiſtles to *Timothy* and *Titus*; otherwiſe he directs, as here, to the whole body of Chriſtians.

Phil. 1. 1. Col. 1. 2. 1 Theſ. 1. 1. 2 Theſ. 1. 1. Jam. 1. 1. 1 Pet. 1. 1. 2 Pet. 1. 1. Jude v. 1.

2. I conſider the importance of the advice, *Prove all things.* The Greek word, which we render *Prove*, ſignifies to examine the truth or goodneſs of a thing; and to diſcern the difference between one thing and another. It ſignifies to try and examine, and ſometime

Luk. 12. 56. & *ch.* 14. *v.* 19. Ro. 2. 18. 1 Cor. 3. 13. 11. 27. 16. 3.

time (as the reſult of ſuch tryal) to approve.

Ro. 2. 18. 12. 2. Eph. 5. 10. Phil. 1. 10. It hath in the New Teſtament a particular reference to matters of Religion: Theſe things deſerve examining, and there are about Religion many dangerous errours which want not the vogue and colour of truth. We are required *to try the Spirits*, and warned *not to believe every Spirit.*

1 Joh. 4. 1.

We are required to examine and try the truth and goodneſs of things, *yea of all things*, and not to take them upon truſt: And this precept is ſubjoined to that, *Deſpiſe not prophecying*; *i. e.* the preaching of the Word, as may be collected from the Apoſtle's words elſewhere.

1 Cor. 14. 3, 4, 5.

St. *Paul* doth frequently put us in mind to reverence the Miniſters of Religion, and tells us how they are to be eſteemed; He requires us in this Chapter *To eſteem them very highly in love for their works ſake*, (v. 13.) and bids us *not deſpiſe prophecyings*: and yet even to this he adds *Prove all things*, &c. Whence I raiſe this Doctrine or Propoſition;

Heb. 13. 17. 1 Cor. 4. 1. 2 Cor. 5. 20.

That it is the duty of Chriſtian people to examine the grounds of their Religion

ligion and Faith, and not to take them upon truſt.

For the better ſpeaking to it I ſhall

Firſt, Shew how this Propoſition is to be underſtood.

Secondly, I ſhall prove the Truth of it.

Thirdly, I ſhall anſwer the Objections that may be brought againſt it.

Fourthly, I ſhall make ſome *Uſe* and *Application* of the whole.

I. I ſhall ſhew how this Propoſition is to be underſtood: And that I ſhall do in the following particulars.

1. What I plead for is a judgment of *diſcretion* and not of *juriſdiction* and *direction*, which belongs to our Superiors. 'Tis here as in the Laws of a Kingdom; the people are obliged to know and keep them. It is the duty and the intereſt of every man to know ſo much of them as concerns his life and property, and the diſcharging his duty to his Prince and Country. But then the power of making theſe Laws lies in his Prince or Governours; and the learned in the Law are only fit to direct and guide men in the matters of doubt and queſtion. And ſo it is in Religion. It does not belong to every private man to be

be a preacher and interpreter of Holy Writ, much leſs hath he any thing to do to make Laws for other men. But the private man hath a Soul to ſave, and in order thereunto is bound to inform himRo. 14. 1. ſelf in matters of Faith, and thoſe things which tend to the regulating his Life and Converſation. We do not receive the people as judges of Controverſies, and *doubtfull Diſputations*; yet think them concerned in Religion in the mean time. For matters of diſpute and queſtion the *Prieſts lips* are to *preſerve knowledge*. Here it becomes private men to be modeſt, and to preſerve a great reverence for their ſpiritual guides. But there is a great deal of difference between asking the way, when we are at a ſtand, and pulling out our eyes and leaving our ſelves wholly to be led by another. We may uſe our *own eyes* and our *guides* too.

2. It is likewiſe a judgment of *private* diſcretion which I plead for. It is not fit that a private man ſhould judge for himſelf and his brother too. His Conſcience is not to be the common ſtandard and meaſure of other mens. *Let*Ro. 14. 5. *every man be fully perſwaded in his own mind.* Every man ought to have this liberty

liberty to himſelf and to be content therewith, and not to cenſure his Brother.

3. The practice of private men muſt (notwithſtanding this liberty) be governed by the Laws of their juſt Superiours. And nothing can excuſe them from an active obedience, but where their Governours command what God hath forbid, or forbid what he hath commanded.

And this determination of our practice (eſpecially in matters of order and diſcipline, of which I would be chiefly underſtood) is very conſiſtent with that judgment of diſcretion which I am now pleading for. Indeed if the thing commanded be evil I muſt obey God rather than man; but if it be not, I ſin againſt God when I diſobey my Superiours. A private man is not judge of what is convenient, moſt decent and orderly, but ought to judge between good and evil, lawfull and unlawfull, true and falſe. Our Doctrine does not give men a liberty to do what they liſt when it permits them a judgment of diſcretion; we do not pull out the peoples eyes, nor yet allow them to break hedges and throw up encloſures and ramble whereever they liſt.

II. I ſhall prove the truth of this Propoſition, and ſhew, that men are not to take their Religion upon truſt; That they ought to examine their Religion; To try the Doctrines which they are taught, whether true or falſe, revealed by God or not: And alſo to conſider whether what is enjoined them be lawfull or not. And to this purpoſe I deſire you to conſider,

1. That the Scripture teacheth us this Doctrine. We are here commanded to *prove all things:* And our Saviour bids his followers *take heed that no man deceive them.* *Chriſt* allows no man a tyranny over the Conſciences of men, nor would St. *Peter* have it uſurped, nor did the *Apoſtles* themſelves practiſe it. St. *Paul* declares himſelf *not to be a Lord over their faith, but an helper of their joy.* *Chriſt* is our *Maſter* and *great Shepherd.* His Miniſters are but *Stewards* and *Embaſſadours*, and are no farther imitable than they follow *Chriſt.*

Mat. 24. 4. *Heb.* 13. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 2 Cor. 1. 24. Heb. 13. 20. 1 Cor. 11. 1.

Our Saviour calls upon his followers to *beware of the doctrine of the Phariſees and Sadducees*, and to *ſearch the Scriptures.* And we are required *to try the Spirits*, and not believe an *Apoſtle* or an *Angel* that ſhould *preach any other Goſpel.*

Matt. 16. Joh. 5. 39. 1 Joh. 4. 1. Gal. 1.

God

God gave his Law for our direction: And we are aſſured that the Scripture is ſufficient to *render the man of God wiſe unto ſalvation through faith in Chriſt.* And thoſe men are commended who *ſearched the Scriptures* and examined the Doctrine of the primitive Preachers by them. Deut. 4. Pſal. 1. 2 Tim. 3. Luke 16. Act. 17. 11.

If the blind lead the blind (ſays Chriſt) *both ſhall fall into the ditch.* Men will not be excuſed becauſe they have been miſled by their guides, and believed as their Church believed. *Ezekiel* tells us, that even where the people are not warned they ſhall die in their iniquity. Religion is every man's concernment, and every man is obliged to take care of his Soul, and not blindly to give himſelf up to him that pretends to be an infallible guide. Mat. 15. 14. Ezek. 3. 17, 18.

Be ready always (ſays St. *Peter*) *to give an anſwer to every man that asketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you.* We muſt then judge of the grounds of our Faith and not take it upon truſt. 1 Pet. 3. 15.

2. I ſhall repreſent to you (for the better confirming my Propoſition) the juſt Exceptions againſt the contrary belief; *viz.* That the people are bound to lay aſide their own diſcretion, and intire-

ly to give themſelves up (without examining) to be led as their guides pleaſe. I ſhall ſhew the dangerous conſequences, the inconſiſtency and vanity, the impiety and unreaſonableneſs of this principle; and that in the following particulars.

[1.] This principle is of the moſt dangerous conſequence.

It would juſtifie the Idolatry of the *Iſraelites* which was at that time introduced upon them by their H. Prieſts or falſe Prophets, or evil Kings. We read of their ſacrificing in high places, their worſhip of the golden Calf, and the Calves of *Dan* and *Bethel*, of their brazen Serpent and their falſe Gods. It was not a juſt excuſe for them that the golden
2 King. 10. Calf was made by *Aaron:* They were not without blame for offering upon that Altar which reſembled that which was at *Damaſcus*, becauſe *Uriah* their H. Prieſt ſet it up, and *Ahaz* their King commanded the uſe of it. But we know that God was angry with them when they followed their blind guides; which he would not have been had they done well in it.

This principle would have juſtified the *Jews* in rejecting our Saviour. For who

who could blame them for doing that which their H. Prieſt and Sanhedrim, their Prieſts and Elders had done before? It is true he wrought many Miracles: But to this they might reply, that their Church did not believe them effected by the power of God. Indeed *Jeſus* appeals often to the Scripture; but, according to this principle, to this they might have pleaded that it was not for private men to underſtand Scripture, and that their Church did underſtand it otherwiſe. They might have pleaded moreover that the interpreting of Scripture did not belong to private men, as they were, and that they were to be governed by Tradition or the Oral Law, and not by the written one only; That they had among them an H. Prieſt and Sanhedrim, Scribes or men learned in the Law and Traditions; which latter they received with equal reverence with the Written Word. *Have any of the Rulers and the Phariſees believed on him?* Joh. 7. 48. ſay they. They were ſo far from it that they agreed that he who confeſſed him to be the *Chriſt*, ſhould be put out of the Synagogue. Would ſuch pretences, think ye, have ſerved the turn of the *Jews*? By no means. They ought to Joh. 9.

have read the Scriptures, to which *Jeſus* appealed, to have compared Events with Prophecies. This our Lord puts them upon, and it was at once their duty and intereſt to have done it. They are commended who took this courſe.

Joh. 5. 39. 45,46,47. Act. 17. 11.

This principle might afterwards have juſtified the *Jews* in their rejecting the Chriſtian Doctrine and the Apoſtles and firſt Preachers thereof. The *Jews* might have pleaded againſt the Apoſtles many things, *e. g.* The undoubted Antiquity of the Jewiſh Church, and novelty of the Chriſtian Doctrine: The neceſſity of giving themſelves up to the Conduct of their *Prieſts*, whoſe *Lips* were to *preſerve knowledge*, and they were to *ſeek the Law at their mouth:* They might have pleaded that they were in the ſafeſt way to ſalvation; for, tho' they denied the poſſibility of it to the Chriſtians, yet *Jeſus* himſelf owned that Salvation was of the *Jews*. They might have urged the *17th* of *Deuteronomy* to prove the Infallibility of *their* Church, with a far greater ſhew than ever *Thou art Peter*, &c. was produced to prove that of the Biſhop of *Rome*. It being expreſly required (*Deut.* 17. 8,10.)

That

That in matters of Controverſie men ſhould abide by the Sentence of the Law pronounced by the Prieſt or Judge of that time; whereas no ſuch thing is ſaid of the Biſhop of *Rome* in the New Teſtament.

This principle would effectually have hindred the propagation of the Chriſtian Religion among the *Gentil* or *Pagan* part of the World. *They* had their Prieſts and High-Prieſts too as well as the *Jews*; they had antiquity to plead, and great ſucceſs and proſperity under their way of worſhip. *Sequendi ſunt nobis parentes, qui feliciter ſequuti ſunt ſuos*, ſaith *Symmachus*. If this principle might be allowed, there could be no way left to ſpread the Faith among them.

This one principle, where-ever admitted, would have put a perpetual bar to the converſion of *Jews* and *Infidels* to the Chriſtian Faith. For what method can we take to bring them over, if we cannot convince them that we are in the *right* and they in the *wrong*? And how can they be made ſenſible of this if we allow them not the liberty of judging? And ſure if they be fit to judge of the *whole* matter, they are not unfit to judge of the *ſeverals*. If we allow them the

liberty to judge of Chriſtianity before they embrace it, it is not reaſonable to deny them a judgment of diſcretion when they are received into the Chriſtian Faith.

This principle admitted would have excuſed the people that ſhould have continued in *Arianiſm*, when the Biſhops and Prieſts and generally the whole Church was infected with it. The *Arians* once filled the Church, called themſelves Orthodox and Catholicks and others Hereticks. According to this principle the people ought to have continued thus always; for they were to be governed by their Biſhops and Prieſts: And why ſhould they think themſelves obliged to hearken to what you had to offer from Scripture, or Reaſon, or the Council of *Nice*, when it was againſt the ſenſe of the preſent Church?

[2.] This principle, not being ſelf-evident, is inconſiſtent too, and manifeſtly deſtroys it ſelf. For 'tis liable to be examined; and ought to be ſtrictly examined, becauſe very much depends upon it. If it may be examined by the people, they who maintain it have loſt their queſtion: For then the people are not obliged to deſpoil themſelves of their faculties

culties and wiſer powers, but may judge in matters of Religion; this being of the moſt principal concernment of all. This ought not to be taken upon truſt, becauſe their ſalvation depends upon it. If this chance to be falſe they may blindly give themſelves up to a guide who may lead them to the regions of darkneſs.

[3.] Suppoſing there were any truth in this principle, yet it would be of no uſe to us unleſs we were alſo directed to the Church and Guides to whom we are to ſurrender our ſelves. Suppoſing we were bound to believe as the Church believes and blindly to follow our Prieſts, yet if we do not know what Church is to be thus truſted, and what Prieſts thus to be confided in, and under what profeſſion we are to do it, we ſhall be at as great a loſs as ever. For it cannot be ſuppoſed that it is the duty of all people, in every Country and under every Profeſſion, to do this. For *Jews*, *Chriſtians* and *Infidels* cannot be all under an equal obligation. It is then to be conſidered to what Church this belongs. If the Chuch of *Rome* put in, ſhe muſt ſhew a better plea than any other that may pretend, and a better

than any ſhe hath produced as yet. For Antiquity, Succeſſion, Miracles, Amplitude, Proſperity, Succeſs, *&c.* theſe are things that may be pleaded in behalf of *Jews*, *Pagans* and *Infidels*. They will at leaſt ſeverally ſhare in theſe pretences. Let the pretence be what it will, before I can admit the pretender I muſt judge his title good, and that will deſtroy the principle.

[4.] This principle invades the prerogative of God, and uſurps upon his peculiar. He only hath a direct dominion over the Conſciences of men. *He* Jam. 4. 12. *is the one lawgiver who is able to ſave and to deſtroy.* We are obliged to believe a verity becauſe he ſaith it. There muſt be a Revelation before a Divine Faith. Men have not power to make Articles of Faith, or to require our aſſent upon preſumption of ſuch power.

[5.] Many things in Religion are ſo plain that a man of ordinary capacity and competently inſtructed in the principles of Religion is able to judge of them: But this principle deſtroys that power, and ſuppoſeth men unable to judge in the plaineſt caſes whatſoever.

From the Writers of the *Romiſh* Church we hear much of the obſcurity of the Scriptures.

Scriptures. I grant that there are ſome things in them hard to be underſtood, and every man therefore is not fit to interpret them. God hath appointed an order of men to do this. He hath given ſome *Apoſtles*, ſome *Prophets*, *Evangeliſts*, *Paſtors* and *Teachers*, not to hoodwink the people and lead them out of the way, but for the *perfecting of the Saints, and for the edifying of the body of Chriſt*, and preſerving the people from the *ſleight of men and cunning craftineſs whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* This is the great purpoſe of the inſtitution: 'Tis for the inſtruction and building up of the faithfull. Eph. 4. 11.

But our way is generally plain, and there we need no guide if we uſe our eyes, and mind our rule. Matters of *faith* as well as *manners* are plainly revealed.

Such are all the Articles of our moſt ancient Creed: They are ſo plainly taught in the H. Scriptures, that he who runs may read them there.

That we love God and our Neighbour are the weightier things of Religion, and eaſie to be underſtood: Juſtice and Mercy and Peaceableneſs are plain. That we obey the King, be charitable to the poor,

poor, juſt to all men, and do as we would be done by: That we uſe no craft or equivocations, but be ſincere in all our actions and profeſſions, are things not hard to be underſtood.

But if men ſhould undertake to be guides to the people, and teach them rebellion, injuſtice, cruelty, diſſembling and equivocation; to kill their King and deſtroy their Enemies; a man of mean underſtanding may diſcern that theſe are not the gifts which *Chriſt* gave unto men, but that they are a company of falſe people, or rather ravenous wolves. To judge of theſe things no man needs a guide who hath eyes in his head.

III. I ſhall now anſwer the Objections which may be brought againſt what I have ſaid.

Obj. 1. 'Tis pretended that this Doctrine will introduce Hereſies and Schiſms into the Church. And we are upbraided with Schiſms and Hereſies as the effect of our Doctrine. On the other hand that the people, who confide in their Paſtors, and believe as the Church believes, are kept in unity and at peace. To this I anſwer,

1. 'Tis

1. 'Tis a fond thing to imagine that there ſhall be no Hereſies or Schiſms, and that we have found a way to prevent them. This is like the boaſt of a Mountebank who pretends to a *Panacea* or univerſal remedy for all diſeaſes; who gains ſmall credit with wiſe men. I grant that Hereſies and Schiſms are great evils, and that we ought to prevent them what we can. And much might be done towards it if the Miniſters of Religion could as eaſily ſecure the practice as inform the minds of men. But *Scandals* or *Offences* are great evils as well as *Hereſies:* And yet *Chriſt* tells us that *it muſt needs be that offences come*; And St. *Paul* tells us as plainly, *There muſt be alſo Hereſies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt among you.* God hath foretold that there ſhould come a *falling away*, and that ſome ſhould be under *ſtrong deluſions and believe a lye.* It is a vain thing to pretend a remedy againſt that evil againſt which God himſelf hath provided none. *Anſw.* Mat. 18. 7. 1 Cor. 11. 19. 2 Theſ. 2.

2. To believe without examining, as the preſent Church believes, is ſo far from preventing Hereſies that it ſecures men under them without any hope of emerging.

emerging. A blind obedience may as well detain men in Hereſie as keep them in the Faith. This principle ſhuts men up, and is ſo far from preventing the diſeaſe, that whenever men are overtaken with it all that it does is that it hinders all remedy.

3. That the principle which I have expoſed, being not ſelf-evident but conteſtable, may well be ſuppoſed to divide men about the main queſtion. It ought to be examined becauſe it does not carry its Evidence along with it. And then who can tell but that the principle which is deviſed to *unite*, may chance to *divide* men, when they go about to examine it?

4. We will ſuppoſe this principle ſelf-evident, and that it hath been anciently and univerſally received (which is by no means to be granted) yet we know that it was not effectual. The *Gnoſticks*, *Arians* and other Hereticks did infeſt the Primitive Church. This principle then was received in the Church from the beginning, or it was not: If it were not, it is then a new Doctrine, and we are not obliged to receive it now. If it were received in the ancient Church, I would then know how Hereſies and Schiſms

Schiſms got into the Church? Was this principle *then* ineffectual, and ſhall it not *now* fail to be effectual?

This Doctrine which I maintain, it may be objected, will deſtroy that reverence which is due from the people to their Paſtors, and make them their Judges. *Obj.* 2.

1. There is a great honour due from the People to their Paſtors. This cannot be denied. They are bound to pay it by all inſtances of regard and kindneſs. *He that receiveth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet ſhall receive a Prophet's reward.* *Anſw.* 1 Theſ. 5. 13. Heb. 13. 17. 1 Cor. 9. 11. 2 Tim. 5. 17. Gal. 6. 6. Mat. 10. 4.

2. This honour hath its bounds and meaſures. It is due for the ſake of their Maſter and their Work, and in proportion to their faithfulneſs and labours. *Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, eſpecially they who labour in the word and doctrine.* But we need not put out our eyes that they may lead us whither they pleaſe; nor are bound to pay that honour to the Servants and Stewards which is only due to their Lord and Maſter. 1 Tim. 5. 17.

3. We may give them all due honour though we do not think them infallible. This the Apoſtle ſuppoſeth in my Text.

For

For though he had required this eſteem from the people towards their Paſtors (*v.* 13.) yet he commands them to *prove all things*. We are obliged to honour our Judges and Civil Magiſtrates, and may truly do it, though we do not believe every ſentence and determination of theirs to be according to exact truth and equity.

For our Judges in civil matters, we are obliged to ſit down by their ſentence, when we do think it juſt: But it does not hence follow that we muſt follow our ſpiritual guides without examining. The Civil Magiſtrate determines only our outward actions, or diſpoſeth of ſome of our goods and properties, which we have power to alienate; but he does not preſcribe upon our inward ſenſe, nor touch upon our Conſcience, as our ſpiritual guides do in their commands. And though we do not appeal from the Civil Magiſtrate, it cannot hence be inferred that we think him infallible.

Obj. 3. But this Doctrine, ſome will ſay, will leave us at great uncertainty, and our Salvation will be very contingent and hazardous unleſs we be provided of an Infallible Guide, without whom we cannot

cannot be ſafe. And that God hath made a ſlender proviſion for our Souls if we be not thus provided for. I anſwer

1. That we are not fit judges of what God *ought* to do, but ought to thank him for what he *hath* done. We diſcourſe at random and very inconſequently when we undertake to ſay what is *fit* for God to do, and then infer he hath done what we judged fit for him to do. At this rate we may as well infer that God hath eſtabliſhed a *Sovereign Umpire* to decide all civil controverſies about *meum* and *tuum*. For ſince theſe things divide the world, and are occaſions of feuds and wars, it may be as fairly ſaid, that this is for the intereſt of the world, as an infallible Judge is for that of the Church. Shall we then conclude that God hath appointed ſuch an one, or elſe he hath been wanting to his Creatures? 'Tis for the intereſt of the Church that the Members of it ſhould be free from poſſibility of ſinning as well as of erring, and yet we know God hath made no ſuch proviſion. An infallible *guide* of *manners* is as neceſſary as ſuch a *guide* of *controverſies*, and yet we cannot ſay there is any ſuch. And then we have no cauſe to make ſuch a concluſion. *Anſw.*

2. That

2. That ſuppoſing it neceſſary there ſhould be an Infallible Judge, yet this would do us no good unleſs we could be infallibly ſure of this Infallible Judge. And there are two things in this caſe we muſt be infallibly certain of, *viz.* [1.] That there is ſome Infallible Judge. [2.] Who that Judge is. Both theſe are neceſſary. We muſt be ſure of a treaſure firſt, and then know where it lies, before we can have cauſe to boaſt of our wealth.

3. That ſuppoſing the preſent Church of *Rome* were the infallible Church, yet the more ſimple ſort of people would not be, for all this, at any greater certainty. For they would have another task upon them, *viz.* to inquire what is the faith and what is the worſhip of this Church. And how will they do to find that out? muſt they be ruled by what the ignorant and common people do? Perhaps the Church does not allow of all their practices. Or ſhall they be governed by their Pariſh Prieſt? But that Prieſt, for what they know, may err, though a Pope or Council cannot. Shall they be governed by common conſent? But there are differing cuſtoms and uſages in *France* and *Spain* and other Countries:

Countries: to which of these shall they adhere? Must they be taught by a Pope *ex cathedra*? But how shall they know if this be a true Pope, or whether he speaks *ex cathedra* or not? Or will you send these people to the Council of *Trent*? Alas, 'tis a thing well known that the words of that Councils Decrees are sometime general and ambiguous and not fit to direct plain and simple people. And yet Pope *Pius* IV. commanded that without his authority no man should explain them. That no man should presume *Ullos commentarios, glossas, annotationes, Scholia, ullúmve omnino interpretationis genus super ipsius Concilii decretis quocunque modo edere.* That is, *By any way to publish any Commentaries, Glosses, Annotations, Scholia, or any sort of interpretation whatsoever upon the Decrees of that Council.* And this under the pain of Excommunication, as appears by his Bull for the confirmation of that Council. For instance: That Council tells us that Images are to be had in Churches, and to have due honour given them. What this due honour is which they allow, how shall the simple man know? Whether it be negative or positive honour? Whether he give too *Sess.* 25.

much or too little? Whether he divide it aright between the Image and the Prototype? How can he know how to govern himself in this affair? Indeed the Council says afterwards that *all Superstition must be avoided.* But what the Superstition is which the Council disallows it does not define. And therefore the plain and simple man will be at a loss how to govern himself.

IV. I shall now make some *Application* of what hath been said.

1. This serves for the reproof of those who would deprive the people of that liberty which God hath given them. This is to despoil them of the great prerogative of their nature, and degrade them into a lower rank of being; which is the greatest tyranny imaginable. There is nothing so much concerns mankind as Religion and the interest of their immortal Souls. We are here put upon trying and proving all things. *Be-*
1 Joh. 4. 1. *lieve not every Spirit* (says St. *John*) *but try the spirits whether they are of God. Christ* bids the *Jews search the Scriptures.* Surely then the Scriptures are not to be kept from the people: And they must be allowed their rule when they are obliged

god to prove all things. If they are obliged to give a reason of their hope, they must be allowed to examine its grounds.

2. This serves for the reproof of those among our selves who do not use that liberty of examining which is allowed them; who neither know nor will understand: That are crafty and diligent in worldly affairs, but supinely negligent in their truest and greatest interest. Too many are wedded to their faction and fond opinions, and both practice and prescribe that which they condemn in the Ch. of *Rome*. Did they ingenuously examine things, and sincerely seek the truth, they might easily avoid the Errors and Schisms they are now justly charged with.

3. Let us then examine the grounds of our faith, especially in the points controverted among us at this time, then will your Communion with the Ch. of *England* not be the result of *Chance*, but of *Judgment*, and of *Choice*. I know no mark of a true Church wanting here, and am sure that many things greatly commend to us her Communion.

First, This Church does not make void the necessity of an holy life. It cancels none of our obligations to God

or man; but teacheth the abſolute neceſſity of contrition and repentance, and mortification of our Luſts: and does by no means indulge a liberty of living as we liſt.

Secondly, She fairly propoſeth her Doctrines, and does not refuſe to have them examined, nor deprive her Children of the means of doing it by the cleareſt light.

Thirdly, Nor are her Doctrines fitted to advance a ſecular intereſt or glory. Religion is an holy inſtitution; heavenly in its principle and pure in its aim, and diſdains to ſtoop to mean arts for wealth and worldly dignities.

Fourthly, This Church teacheth nothing that is manifeſtly falſe, nor puts us upon any practice which is a direct violation of any divine inſtitution.

Fifthly, Nor does this Church want the excellent badge of *Charity*, which is indeed *the bond of perfectneſs*. *Religion* was deſigned as the greateſt bleſſing to mankind, and the author of the *Chriſtian* was a great lover of humane race. Its precepts are full of kindneſs and benignity, and commend the higheſt pitch of civility and compaſſion, and the higheſt flights of friendſhip.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, As obedience to Kings and Governours is a great part of the Chriſtian Religion, and an ornament to it, and was in an eminent degree practiſed by the firſt and beſt Chriſtians, ſo it is the doctrine of our Church, and hath always been the practice of the members of it.

In a word, we pray for our enemies, and teach men to give both God and *Cæſar* their due. We think it ſafe to worſhip no Image, and are ſure we are right when we pray to God through the mediation of *Jeſus Chriſt*. We know that *God* hears, but cannot ſay ſo of *Saints* and *Angels*. We receive the Sacrament in both kinds as given by *Chriſt*, and received by the ancient Church: And do believe the Sacramental bread after conſecration to be what the Apoſtle calls it more than once. For the Doctrine of Concomitance we leave it to them who underſtand it. We pray in a tongue we underſtand. We follow the H. Scriptures, believe the ancient Creeds, nor do we reject the firſt general Councils. We preſs men to piety, loyalty, humility and charity, and earneſtly deſire the ſalvation of mankind. We preſs men to all manner of good works; but

place our hope in the mercy of God and merits of his Son. If we live up to our rule we are safe; If not, 'tis not the fault of our Religion, 'tis our own. If we live up to our Religion we shall never be miserable in this world, and in the next shall be unspeakably happy. *Which God of his mercy grant us for the sake of Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and H. Ghost be all honour and glory now and for ever.* Amen.

SER-

SERMON XI.

Preached before the

KING and QUEEN

AT

WHITE-HALL,

Novemb. the 5th. 1692.

2 SAM. XXIV. 14.

And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD (for his mercies are great) and let me not fall into the hands of man.

DAVID was moved by *Satan*, not to lay by his own Ambition, to Number the People of *Israel*. He gives this Matter in Charge to *Joab*,

nor will he be diverted from it. The People are Numbred, and the Account of their Number returned. *David*'s Heart ſmote him, he is ſenſible of his Sin, and deprecates God's Diſpleaſure. Upon this the Prophet *Gad* is ſent to *David* with a Meſſage; and a ſad one it is: He hath his Option indeed out of Three great Evils; either Seven Years Famine, or Three Months Flight before his Enemies, or Three Days Peſtilence in his Land: Upon this Meſſage *David* ſaid unto *Gad*, *I am in a great ſtrait*, &c.

I humbly crave leave in the way to my Text, to clear the foregoing Hiſtory from ſome Difficulties which attend upon it, eſpecially as it is with ſome variety related in this Chapter, and in the Book of *Chronicles*.

Firſt, It may be demanded, Where lay the *Sin* of *David* in Numbering the People?

Secondly, If there were a Sin in *David*, yet with what Juſtice could the People be puniſhed for it?

Thirdly, If this were a Sin in *David*, how can it be ſaid that God moved him to it?

Fourthly, What Account can be given of the different Numbers related here, and in the Book of *Chronicles*? Here the Number of the Men of *Israel* is said to amount to Eight hundred thousand, but there we have a Number that exceeds this by Three hundred thousand. Here the Men of *Judah* are said to be Five hundred thousand, there the Number comes short by Thirty thousand.

Fifthly, What Account can be given of the Difference as to the Time of the Famine? One place mentions a Famine of *Seven*, the other only of *Three* Years.

There are too many, who from such Difficulties take occasion to cry down the Inspiration and Authority of the Holy Writ; and the *Jews* declaim against the Evangelists with less pretence.

I. Where lay the Sin of *David* in Numbring the People? Is it any where forbidden in the Law of *Moses*?

I answer,

1. That it is evident that *David* sinned. We read that his *Heart smote him*, and he said, I have *sinned greatly in what I have done*, (v. 10.) *Joab* dissuaded him

him from it, as that which would be a *cause of trespass to Israel.* Besides, the Sin is punished with a devouring Pestilence.

1 Chron. 21. 3.

2. That we are not obliged to believe, that the bare Numbring the People was all the fault that *David* was guilty of. For tho' his Numbring the People can hardly be justified without a sufficient Reason, or special Direction, yet we need not lay all his Sin upon his meer Numbring them.

God had promised to *Abraham*, That his *Seed* should be as the *Stars of Heaven*, numberless as they: 'Tis elsewhere said to him, *I will multiply thy Seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbred for multitude.* And *Jacob* says expressly unto God, *Thou saidst I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbred for multitude*; and *Balaam* from this *Idea* said, *Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?*

Gen. 15. 5. 16. 10. Gen. 32. 12. Num. 23. 10.

The *Jewish* Doctors teach, That it was not lawfull to Number the *Israelites* by their *Polls*. That whenever their Number was to be taken, it was to be taken not by their *Polls*, but by something else, e.g. by taking the Number

Maimon. H. Tamid & Musaph. c. 4. *Rasbi & Kimch.* in 1 *Sam.* 15. 4. *Joma*, c. 2. m. 1. *cum Sheringham.*

of

of the Paschal Lambs, or Half-shekels, or some other things from which their Numbers might be collected; for which they ground themselves on *1 Sam. 15. 4.* with *chap. 11. v. 8.*

'Tis true indeed, that *Moses* in the Wilderness did several times Number the *Israelites*; but 'tis as true, that he did it by direction from God, and for wise and great Ends, not here to be insisted upon. But *David* had no Warrant here to do it. Numb. 1. & 26.

But whatever the bare Numbring of the People were, 'tis certain 'twas a Sin, when it was done from a faulty Principle, to a wrong End, or otherwise than it ought to be. This Action of *David's* might be culpable upon the following Accounts.

First, As it was an Argument of Pride and Ambition; 'twas *Pectatum Elationis*, says one of the Ancients. He did it (says another) *Ad metiendas imperii vires*. And the Punishment by the consuming Pestilence, which diminished the Numbred, carried in it the Signature of the Sin of Boasting of the Great Numbers of his People. Pride corrupts even a lawful Action.

Secondly,

Secondly, Sacrilege is another Sin that is said to have attended upon this Action. *Josephus*, when he relates this passage, tells us, That *David* forgot the Precept of *Moses*, who upon Numbring the People, required the Payment of the Half-shekel; which was for the Use of the Sanctuary. He might have added, that this was required by *Moses* under the Penalty of a Plague, which ensued here. The words of *Moses* are express: *When thou takest the summ of the Children of Israel, after their numbers, then shall they give every man a ransome for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numbrest them: That there be no* PLAGUE *amongst them when thou numbrest them.* *David* takes the Number, but we hear nothing of God's Offering; and no wonder then that the Plague threatned should succeed.

Antiq. l. 7. c. 13.

Exod. 30. 12, 13.

Thirdly, Another Fault of *David*'s is thought to be this, That he numbred those who were under the Age of Twenty Years, and pryed farther into the Numbers of *Israel*, than God had permitted him. The *Israelites* were numbred three times in the Wilderness, but Care was taken that they should be numbred but from twenty Years old and

Vid. *Bertram Lucubr. Frankatullenf.* c. 2.

Exod. 38. 26.
Num. 1. 3. 26. 2.
Exod. 20. 14.

and upwards, whenever their Number was taken. This was expreſly provided for in the Law of *Moſes*; under that Age they might not be numbred; and that *becauſe the Lord had ſaid, he would increaſe Iſrael like to the ſtars of the heavens.* 'Tis ſaid indeed that *David took not the number of them from twenty years old and under.* But it follows that *Joab began to number* (*i. e.* to number from twenty Years old, and under, as has been thought) but indeed he *finiſhed not, becauſe there fell wrath for it*; And hence (as it follows) it was, this Account or Number was not taken into the Publick Commentaries or Chronicles. 1 Chron. 27. 23, 24.

II. If *David* ſinned in numbring the People, yet how could it conſiſt with Juſtice to puniſh the People for it?

To this I anſwer,

1. That it is no Injuſtice to puniſh a wicked People, whatever occaſion God takes to do it. There's no force in this Objection, unleſs we can ſuppoſe the People innocent. God deſign'd to puniſh *Iſrael*. He was juſtly diſpleaſed with them. The *Peoples* Sins are many times 2 Sam. 24. 1.

times the cauſe of the Miſcarriage of their *Kings*.

2. 'Tis certain that this People deſerved this Severity. They had been guilty in the Revolt of *Sheba*; they were not what they ſhould be after the Diſcipline of three Years Famine; they paid not their Ranſom when they were numbred, and yet that Omiſſion was threatned with a Plague by *Moſes*.

2 Sam. 20.

III. If *David* ſinned, yet how can it be ſaid that God moved him to it? *v.* 1.

I anſwer,

1. That it is expreſly ſaid in a parallel place, that *Satan ſtood up againſt Iſrael, and provoked David to number Iſrael*? 'Twas that evil One that tempted to this Sin. *God* cannot be *tempted* to evil, nor *does he tempt any Man.*

1 Chron. 21. 1.

2. Such is the Expreſſion (*v.* 1.) that there is no reaſon to impute the Evil to God; but in the parallel place 'tis expreſly imputed to Satan. 'Tis ſaid indeed (*v.* 1.) that *he moved David againſt them*, as we render it. But 'tis well known that ſuch an Expreſſion imports no more, but that *David* was moved: 'Tis very common in the Holy Writ,

Writ, that an Active Verb without a Perſon is to be taken paſſively. And that is the caſe here: and there are many ſuch in the Scriptures.

'The well obſerving this way of 'ſpeaking will remove the Difficulty of 'ſeveral Texts of the Holy Scriptures, 'where there are a great number of 'places thus to be explained. *v.g. They 'could not believe becauſe that Eſaias 'ſaid again, he hath blinded their eyes, 'and hath hardened their hearts.* Joh. xii. '39, 40. We muſt not think the *Jews* 'Unbelief is here imputed to God, as 'the cauſe of it. For as 'tis not ſo imputed by the Prophet (*Eſai.* 6. 9.) nor 'in the Quotation of that place as it lies 'in St. *Matthew*, (*ch.* xiii. 14, 15.) nor 'in the *Syriac* Verſion of this place, ſo 'it ought not by our Interpreters: For 'it imports no more but this, that their 'Eyes were blinded, and their Hearts 'hardened. Thus we read, *He hardened Pharaoh's heart*; (*Exod.* vii. 13.) 'nothing more is meant but this, That '*Pharaoh*'s heart was hardened. So the '*Vulgar* and *Chaldee* render it, and ſo 'the *Hebrew* is rendred by our *Engliſh* 'v. 22. There is no Perſon mentioned 'in one place or in the other: And in

'the

'the next Chapter it is expreſly ſaid, 'that *Pharaoh hardened his heart at this* 'time alſo; which words impute his 'foregoing hardneſs to himſelf. All that 'can be meant by it, is that his Heart 'was hardened. And for the other place, 'what is rendered in St. *John* (*Chap.* xii. '40.) *He hath blinded*, &c. is thus ex-'preſſed in another place: The heart of 'this people is waxed groſs, and their 'eyes have they cloſed, Acts xxviii. 27. 'This is a common way of ſpeaking with 'the holy Writers, *Make to your ſelves* 'friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſ-'neſs, that when ye fail THEI MAI 'RECEIVE you, i. e. That ye may 'be received (*Luk.* xvi. 9.) Again, *This* 'night do they require thy ſoul, (ſo the 'Greek imports, and ſo is our Marginal 'Reading.) i. e. Thy Soul ſhall be re-'quired, *Luk* xii. 20. I might add o-'ther places, as *Luk.* xiv. 35. with *Matt.* 'v. 13. and *Iſai.* ix. 9. And the true 'Senſe of what is rendred, *He moved* 'David, imports no more than this, that 'David was moved.

IV. What Account can be given of the different Numbers reported here, and in the Book of *Chronicles*? Here the Men

Men of *Iſrael* amount to Eight hundred thouſand, the Number there exceeds this by Three hundred thouſand. Here the Men of *Judah* are Five hundred thouſand, there they come ſhort by Thirty thouſand.

I anſwer,

1. This Difference is fairly reconcileable from the different ways of taking theſe Numbers. The legal way was from Twenty Years old and upwards, the illegal (which *Joab* is ſuppoſed to have made uſe of) takes in ſome under that Age; and accordingly the whole Number muſt be more or leſs.

2. There is another way of removing the Difficulty as to the different Number of the *Iſraelites*: That in the ſmaller Number *Benjamin* and *Levi* were not reckoned, but were in the greater. 'Tis ſaid of *Joab*, *Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: For the King's word was abominable to Joab*, *i. e.* in the Account which *Joab* gave in to *David*, and which is mentioned in *Samuel*, he had not reckoned *Benjamin* and *Levi*, *David*'s Command being grievous to him. And hence that Number falls ſhort of the other. For the confirming hereof

Abravenel in 2 Sam. 24.

1 Chron. 21. 6.

we ſhall find ground from the Text here, and in the Book of *Chronicles*. Here 'tis only ſaid, that there were in *Iſrael* Eight hundred thouſand: There 'tis ſaid, that *all Iſrael*, or, (as we render it) *all* they of *Iſrael* were a Thouſand thouſand and an hundred thouſand Men. The one gives Account of *all Iſrael*, and the other excepts *Benjamin* and *Levi*.

2 Sam. 24. 9. *with* 1 Chron. 21. 5.

For the Difference as to the Men of *Judah*, 'tis the leſs or broken Number, and not ſo conſiderable. And 'tis poſſible that the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem* are reckoned in one place and omitted in the other.

1 Chron. 21. 15.

V. What Account can be given of the Difference as to the time of the Famine? One place mentions a Famine of Seven, the other of Three Years. The lxxii have Three Years in this place. And that may ſeem more agreeable to the *three* Months Sword, and the *three* Years Peſtilence. Shall we now conclude the place corrupted?

I anſwer,

By no means. The Caſe I take to be this, There had been Three Years Famine already upon the Score of the *Gibeonites*.

2 Sam. 21.

Gibeonites. This Year in which the People were numbred, was the Fourth Year from the beginning of that Famine, and being a Sabbatical Year could not remove it; Three Years forward added to these Four, make up Seven Years Famine: So then the Seven Years Famine in *Samuel*, take in the Three past and the present Year, and Three more to come; the Three in *Chronicles* are to be understood of the Three to come after this. *Abravanel in* 2 Sam. 24. *J. Armachan, ad A.M.* 2987.

Having thus cleared my way I return to my Text, *And David said unto Gad*, &c.

In which Words we have an Account,

First, Of *David's* great Strait, *And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait.*

Secondly, Of his Resolution or Choice, *Let us fall now into the hands of the Lord, and let me not fall into the hands of man.*

Thirdly, The Reason which he assigns, why he chose to fall into the Hands of the Lord, *For his mercies are great.* This also insinuates the Cruelty of Men, whose very tender Mercies are cruel.

I. We have an Account of *David*'s great Strait, *And David ſaid unto Gad, I am in a great ſtrait.* It muſt needs be great, when theſe Evils are laid before him, and he is to chooſe Famine, Sword, or Peſtilence: To this miſerable Caſe had his Sin reduced him. Here is

—— *Plurima mortis imago.*

Here's Death placed before him in ſeveral Shapes and Forms. The Famine is a *lingring* Death, the Sword is a *violent*, the Peſtilence a *ſudden* one.

II. We have *David*'s Reſolution and Choice, *Let us fall now into the hands of the Lord*, &c.

By the way, there being three Evils propounded to him, Famine, Sword, and Peſtilence, *David* forthwith refuſeth Famine, and reduceth theſe Evils to two only. For beſides that his People had lain under a three Years Famine already, upon the ſcore of the *Gibeonites*, and that had not wrought a Cure upon them, there could be nothing expected from a ſeven Years Famine, but an utter Deſtruction of the People. Beſides, a Death by Sword or Peſtilence are more eligible than that by Famine.

They

They that *be ſlain with the ſword, are better than they that be ſlain with hunger. For theſe pine away, ſtricken through for want of the fruits of the field. The hands of the pitifull women have ſodden their own Children, they were their meat in the deſtruction of the daughter of my people.* There is nothing ſo formidable as this kind of Death is to Mankind. Lament. 4. 9, 10.

No wonder then that *David* reduced his Evils to two: The *Sword* of his *Enemies*, and the *Sword of the Lord*, as the Peſtilence is called in a parallel place. The latter of theſe is more immediately God's Hand. The Peſtilence is Τὸ Θεῖον, a Divine Inflict̃ion, more peculiarly, and more immediately. Againſt this Evil there needs no Warlike Preparation, as againſt the Sword of the Enemy. Here's no room for any thing but Repentance and Tears, Prayers and Humiliations. This Enemy walketh in Darkneſs, and is not to be provided againſt as the Enemies Sword is. Beſides, the Enemies Sword might cut off, but not amend his People. Camps and Armies are ſeldom the Schools of Vertue, and Inducements to Repentance: And therefore *David* chooſeth this. *Let us fall*, &c. 1 Chron. 21. 12.

III. The reason which he assigns for this choice; *For his mercies are great.* This also insinuates the Cruelty of Men, whose Mercies are many times cruel.

Josephus, in relating this Matter, lets us understand the Charity of King *David* to his People in making this Choice. If he had chosen the Famine, he had chosen very ill for his poor Subjects, but well enough for himself. His own Riches and Store might have supplied him with provisions for himself, whilst his poor Subjects had starved. Had he chosen the Sword of the Enemies for three Months, his People might in that that time have been cut off, but his own Person might have been secured by his Guards, or strong Castles and Places of Retreat; but he chuseth, Τὸ κοινὸν ἐν βασιλεῦσι καὶ τοῖς ἀρχομένοις. *An Evil that is incident to Kings, and to Subjects.* And in this he was an admirable Pattern to the best of Kings and Governours, who are always most concerned for the Safety and Welfare of their People.

But I will not search after any other Reasons of *David*'s Choice; tho' it were not difficult to assign many others. I will

will confine my ſelf to that which he gives in the Words of my Text, *For his mercies are great*; which, by the way, is both the reaſon of his Choice, and of his Refuſal of the Sword of his Enemies, *Let me not fall into the hands of man*; where the Cruelty of Men is fairly inſinuated.

I might here entertain you with a large Account of the Cruelties of Men, and of the Mercies of God. *David* had great Experience of one, and of the other. He was perſecuted by *Saul* from time to time. His Merits, and his Affinity, his Innocence and Great Atchievements were no Protection to him. He was very ſenſible of the Malice of *Doeg*, the Churliſhneſs of *Nabal*, the Injuries received from the *Amalekites* and *Philiſtines*. He met with great Rudeneſs from *Hanun*, an unnatural Rebellion from *Abſolom*, and bitter Curſes from *Shimei*. He therefore knew very well the Cruelty of Men, and how little Mercy he could expect from his profeſſed and victorious Enemies. He met with hard Uſage from his Relatives, from thoſe whom he had ſerved, whom he had obliged, and preſerved. He might well ſay, *Let me not fall into the hands of man.*

We need not go far for Proof of the Cruelty of our Enemies: The Occaſion of our meeting here this Day, lays before us an Example without any parallel. Here we have a Maſter-piece of the greateſt Treachery and Cruelty too; and that alſo without any juſt Provocation or Reaſon.

It was a Treachery and Perfidiouſneſs in the higheſt degree, a formed Deſign to blow up the King, and the Parliament, our Laws and Religion, our Rights and Liberties at a Blow. 'Twas a Treachery ſo black and ſo deteſtable that Heathens would have abhorred, and puniſhed it alſo. They would have ſcorned to have overcome their Enemies this way. So far were they from it, that they would have contemned and ſtigmatized the Traytor that offered them his aſſiſtance. In the War the *Romans* had with King *Pyrrhus*, one of that King's Subjects, (a Fugitive) offered *Fabricius*, to return to *Pyrrhus*, and kill him, if he would give him a Reward: He was ſo far from doing it, that he ſent the Traytor back to *Pyrrhus*, and the Senate approved what he did. They would not deliver themſelves from ſo powerfull an Enemy by Treachery, nor

Cicero Offic. l. 3.

nor put an end to that expenſive War, by encouraging a perfidious Traytor. An open Enemy we can provide againſt. Here we have notice, and are not ſurprized; But Fraud and Treachery walk in the Darkneſs, and deſtroy us as *Joab* did *Abner*, of whom *David* ſpeaks, ſaying, *Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters, as a man falleth before wicked men, ſo fellest thou.* Such an Enemy is of all things the moſt deteſtable; and 'tis the Intereſt of all Mankind to combine againſt, and exterminate ſuch Serpents from the face of the Earth. Into ſuch hands as theſe, were we very near falling. 2 Sam. 3. 34.

It was alſo Cruelty in the higheſt degree. Never was there a greater inſtance of Barbarity and Unmerciſulneſs. Had it taken effect, who can expreſs the Effects of this one Blow? Who can reckon up the multitude of Mourners, that would in a moment have been made Widows and Fatherleſs? Who can expreſs the Confuſion and Miſeries that would have enſued! The Authors of this Deſign muſt have put off the *Chriſtian*, when they were engaged in the *Treachery*; and when in the *Cruelty*, the *Man* alſo. They muſt have loſt all Bowels,

els, and become ἀνθρωποφάγοι θῆρες, Wolves and Tygers in Humane Shape.

But that which enhances the Wickedneſs, is, that there was no Provocation to this Rage and Fury: Nothing could have juſtified ſo baſe a Practice; but here was no occaſion given. Theſe Men had been gently uſed, enjoyed their Properties, and were undiſturbed in their Poſſeſſions, and their Liberties.

By the way, I cannot but take notice, that theſe Practices ſpeak too plainly the faultineſs of their Principles. Theſe things are ſo far from commending their Belief, that they abundantly expoſe it. That Religion can never be from God, that inſpires Men with Fury and ill-will. The worſt Cauſe is always moſt fierce and fell. *He that was born after the fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the ſpirit.* Thus it hath always been, and thus it is now. The Wiſdom from above is not only pure, but peaceable, &c. Our Lord came not to kill, but to ſave. He would not call for Fire from Heaven, againſt Heretiocks or Enemies. What greater proof can we have of a falſe Religion, than that it promotes Cruelty and Oppreſſion? Maſſacres and Murders, Treaſons and Rebellions,

Gal. 4. 29.

bellions, are none of the Notes of the Catholick Church of CHRIST. But I leave this unpleasant Argument, and proceed to the more expreſs Reaſon of *David*'s Choice. *Let us fall now into the Hands of the* LORD, *For his mercies are great.*

David had great Experience of this alſo. He had experimented this in the whole courſe of his Life. God had delivered him from the hands of *Saul*, and of all his Enemies; He was delivered from the Lyon, and the Bear, from *Goliah*, and from very many, and very great Evils.

Well might *David* ſay, *His mercies are great.* We may all ſay ſo. This Day proclaims it: And we are all of us Witneſſes of this great Truth.

We cannot number the Mercies of GOD. They are more than we can expreſs; they encompaſs us on every ſide. *The Lord is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* Pſal. 145. 9. *Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and thy faithfulneſs reacheth unto the clouds.* 36. 5, 6. *O Lord, thou preſerveſt man and beaſt.* 103. 8. *The Lord is mercifull and gracious, ſlow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*

I am

I am not ſo vain, as to attempt to lay all the Mercies of God before you, and to give you up the Particulars of them. 'Twill ſuffice at preſent, that I mind you of ſomething on this occaſion.

How great are his Mercies to our Souls! He hath given his Son, revealed his Will, promiſed his Spirit, and propounded for the Encouragement of us, Eternal Life. He gives us time to repent, beſeecheth us to be reconciled, and woo's and courts us to be happy.

His Laws are gentle, his Aſſiſtances at hand; he is ready to help our Obedience, and to reward it alſo.

He gives us Being, Life and Motion, Health, and all the Comforts of Life.

He takes not Advantages againſt us, he is forward to help us, and *does not willingly afflict the children of men*; he is always prone to do us Kindneſſes, and very *ſlow to Anger*. This the *Hebrew* Doctors mean when they ſay, *That Michael flies but with one wing, Gabriel with two*; i. e. The Meſſenger of good Tidings (ſuch was *Gabriel*) is diſpatched away apace, but he that brings evil Tidings (as *Michael* does) is ſlow.

He *ſpares us when we deſerve puniſhment*, he does not ſtrike when we provoke

voke him; and when he does, he doth not ſtir up all his Wrath.

He hath often *kept our eyes from tears, our feet from falling*, and *our Souls from Death.*

He made us, and his watchfull Eye hath preſerved us ever ſince; he hath preſerved us from the Grave, when we were within the Proſpect of Death and the Fears of Hell; he hath ſaved us upon the tempeſtuous Seas, and in the Day of Battel, and when *our Father and Mother hath forſaken us, he hath taken us up.*

He hath in our Trouble heard our humble Prayer, hath ſcattered our Fears, and been better to us than our Hopes.

Who can reckon up the Mercies of Immunity that are owing to the Goodneſs of God altogether? That we are at Eaſe, not under Tortures of Gout or Stone, not under the Flames of Calentures; that we are not bereft of our Underſtanding, or Limbs; and innumerable other Mercies there are of this kind.

That our Friends live, and numberleſs Comforts of Light are continued to us; that we are alive this Day, and have great Hopes that we ſhall be happy in a better World.

We

We are Witneſſes that God's Mercies are great: The whole Creation is likewiſe a Witneſs of it; there is nothing more evident and inconteſtable.

God is good to us, and his Mercies exceed all that we can ſay; he is kind to us at another rate than we are to one another; he is kind without a Motive, and notwithſtanding our Demerits: He ſeeks our Good and Happineſs, though he would be, and be happy, if we were not, or if we were miſerable. His Kindneſs is moſt ſincere; it cannot be ſuſpected: we are dearer to *him* than we are to our ſelves.

This Kingdom hath had great Experience of the Mercies of God. The Deliverance we now remember was God's Work, and a Miracle of Mercy it was, and never to be forgotten. Our Deſtruction was determined by our Enemies; nor was it our Wiſdom that could foreſee it, nor in our Power to prevent it, had not God interpoſed for our Reſcue and Relief. We may ſay as the Apoſtle, *We had the ſentence of death in our ſelves; that we ſhould not truſt in our ſelves, but in God which raiſeth the dead; who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we*

2 Cor. 1. 9, 10.

truſt

truſt that he will yet deliver us. If it had not been the Lord that was on our ſide, now may [our] *Iſrael ſay; If it had not been the Lord, who was on our ſide, when men roſe up againſt us: Then they had ſwallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled againſt us. Bleſſed be the Lord who hath not given us a prey to their teeth.* We have had many Deliverances. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may* [our] *Iſrael now ſay, many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed againſt me.* Pſal. 124. Pſal. 129.

Our Holy Religion is the greateſt Bleſſing under Heaven, the undiſturbed Practice of it is a Mercy that we cannot over-value; in this Church we have it in its greateſt Purity. This great Bleſſing God hath preſerved to us after all Attempts to introduce Superſtition; we were going back into *Egypt* again, and all good Men had a ſad Proſpect of things: God raiſed up a Deliverer, and we are ſaved without our Fault, and beyond our Hopes. God fill our Hearts with a due ſence of this unvaluable Mercy, and grant we may never fall into the hands of cruel Men.

This

This is what *David* deprecates in the words of my Text, *Let me not fall into the hands of man.*

We are always beſt when we are in the hands of God, *For his mercies are great.*

If it be ſaid that God is ſaid to *viſit the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children unto the third and fourth Generation*, this is of no Force againſt what hath been ſaid of the great Mercies of God. For this is ſaid (as *Maimon* well obſerves) only in the caſe of Idolatry, where the Idolater may well be ſuppoſed to ſuffer in his Off-ſpring to the third and fourth Generation, as well as to live and ſee ſo far. Beſides, God is ſaid in the ſame place to *ſhew Mercy unto thouſands of them that love him and keep his Commandments.*

If it be ſaid that the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* affirms, that 'tis *a fearfull thing to fall into the hands of the living God:* Yet neither will this be an Objection of any weight againſt what hath been ſaid, or againſt *David's* Choice in my Text, when he ſays, *Let us fall now into the hands of the Lord:* For it is to be conſidered, that the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* ſpeaks of *Apoſtates* from

from the Chriſtian Religion: and he that falls thus, will fall heavily indeed, and find *God a conſuming Fire.* In this Caſe *there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin, but a certain fearfull looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which ſhall devour the Adverſaries.* This is of all the moſt dangerous Fall, it puts us out of the Hands of God's Mercy, and puts us in the Hands of his juſt Vengeance. *David* could not wiſh to fall thus, he chooſeth the Divine Chaſtiſement rather than the Sword of his Enemies; he had rather be corrected by God, than perſecuted by his Enemies. But nothing is ſo formidable as a falling from our Stedfaſtneſs; whether it be a total Apoſtacy from Chriſtianity, or from the Purity and Simplicity thereof, to the Superſtitions and vile Corruptions and Practices of the Church of *Rome.* We read of ſome who *received not the love of the truth that they might be ſaved.* Theſe Men were ready to *fall* indeed *into the hands of the living God.* It follows, *For this Cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſions to believe a lye; that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.* God keep us from falling thus.

Heb. 10. 27, 31.

2 Theſſ 2. 16.

If we muſt ſuffer, may we ſuffer by God's hands, not by the hands of Men. We are ſure God will chaſtiſe us in meaſure, he will conſider our Frame and deſign our Amendment; he will accept of our Repentance, and not be deaf to our Cries; nor will he be angry with us for ever; he delights not in our Miſery, but had rather we ſhould turn and live.

On the other hand, if we fall into the hands of Men, we have no Security of Common Juſtice, much leſs of Pity and Compaſſion: *Magna pars hominum eſt quæ non peccatis iraſcitur, ſed peccantibus.* Men are too often greater *Enemies* to our *Perſons*, than to our *Vices*. They too often are governed by Humour and irregular Paſſions, by a blind and bitter Zeal, by violent Prejudices, and inveterate Bigottry, by Hatred and Malice, by Secular Intereſts and Regards. They too ſeldom allow for Humane Infirmities, and often make a wrong Judgment of the Merits of the Cauſe. They too often deſtroy the Innocent with the Guilty, and diſtinguiſh not between the Innocent and Obnoxious. *The Sword devoureth one as well as the other.* We can never be ſafe in ſuch hands. No wonder that *David* ſhould deſire

deſire to fall into the hand of GOD, and not into the hands of Men.

From all that hath been hitherto ſaid, I crave leave to draw ſome Corollaries, and Leſſons of Inſtruction. And they are theſe that follow:

Firſt, The neceſſity of obſerving inviolably the Divine Inſtitutions and Laws. The numbring of the People, whatever it were in itſelf, had its appendant Laws, which ought to have been obſerved: Herein lay the fault of *David*, that he neglected them. God will not be mocked, we muſt keep to our Rule.

Secondly, We ſee what reaſon we have to *pray for Kings, and all in Authority*. 'Tis hard to ſay, whether it be more our Duty, or our Intereſt ſo to do. Their Actions have a great influence upon their People, whoſe Safety is often bound up in their good Conduct and Adminiſtration.

Thirdly, We may learn the Miſchief of Pride and Boaſting in our Preparations and our Numbers. God can ſoon defeat us if we do not intirely confide in him. This you have heard was the Caſe of King *David*, who was other-

wiſe a *Man after God's own Heart.*

Fourthly, Here is an excellent Pattern to thoſe who have Dominion over others, of Tenderneſs and Compaſſion towards thoſe who are ſubject to them. *David* is concerned for the Good of his People; he does not chooſe for himſelf only, but for his People, whoſe Safety he was greatly concerned for. This appears from his Choice in my Text, and from his Demeanour under the Hand of God. Thus we read what he ſaid unto God, when he ſaw the Angel that ſmote the
Ver. 17. People, *Lo* (ſays he) *I have ſinned, and I have done wickedly: But theſe Sheep what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be againſt me, and againſt my father's houſe.* Such was his Concern for thoſe who were committed to his Charge.

This one of the Ancients reckons the
Polyb. Hiſt. Lib. 5. Property of a King; and he makes this the Difference between a King and a Tyrant; that the One governs by Fear, and hates his People, the Other purſues them with Beneficence and good Will.

Fifthly, We may learn hence the beſt way to ſecure the Divine Protection, *viz.* by keeping ſteady in our Obedience to the Divine Precepts and Inſtitutions. If we depart from this, we bring

bring our ſelves into Straits and Difficulties. This was *David*'s Caſe, and this hath often come to paſs. The *Jews* have a Saying, That when Men ſhake off the Yoke of the Law, God puts them under the Yoke of the Kingdom. That is, when they forſake their Obedience he gives them up to the Hands of Men, to rule over them.

I add that we have here a great Pattern to imitate, I mean that of God's Mercy: And it becomes us to imitate him whom we worſhip. If God be merciſull we ought to be ſo too: His Mercy to us all, does moſt powerfully commend to us the ſhewing Mercy to one another.

To Conclude,

We ſee what cauſe we have to offer up all poſſible Praiſe and Thankſgiving to Almighty God for the Deliverance we commemorate this Day, that he gave us not up into the hands of cruel and blood thirſty Men, and that he ſtill preſerves us from them. *Oh that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs and for his wonderfull works to the children of men.* What ſhall we render to his Divine Majeſty for all theſe Mercies! Let us *offer*

unto God Thankſgiving, and pay our Vows to the moſt High.

God hath done great things for us; let us do whatever we can for the Service of him; let us uſe all our Power to advance the Honour of his Name, and to bring others that are under our Care and Influence to do him Service. *He hath ſaved us from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us:* What have we more to do but to pray, *That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might ſerve him without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him all the days of our life.*

Luk. 1. 71, 74, 75.

Which that we may do, and be bleſſed in our Deed; God of his infinite Mercy grant through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour and Glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

SER-

SERMON XII.

Preached before the

KING and QUEEN

AT

WHITE-HALL,

March 12. 1692.

Being the Second Sunday *in* Lent.

MATTH. V. 43, 44.

Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: But I ſay unto you, Love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you.

THeſe Words are a part of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount. In which Sermon *Jeſus* puts his Followers upon a greater pitch of Holi-

neſs and Perfection than what the bare Letter of the Law of *Moſes*, and the Interpretation of the *Jewiſh* Doctors exacted from them. This appears abundantly from what our Saviour hath ſaid before with reſpect to thoſe Laws of *Moſes* which forbid *Murder*, *Adultery* and *Perjury*, and which allowed *an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*. He tells us here how we ought to be affected towards our Enemies, and what *he* requires more of his Followers than was required by the Letter of the Law of *Moſes*. And

Firſt, He lays before us what proviſion was made in the Law of *Moſes*. *Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.*

Secondly, He lets them know what *he* requires of all his Followers. *But I ſay unto you, Love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you*, &c.

I. *Jeſus* lays before us the Law of *Moſes*. *Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.*

For

For the former part of the words, *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour*, we find it expreſsly ſaid, *Lev.* xix. 18. For the latter part, *And hate thine enemy*, we are to ſeek.

Here ariſeth a difficulty that muſt be removed. A late *Jewiſh* Writer objects this againſt St. *Matthew* as a falſifier. For theſe words are not to be found in all the Old Teſtament. So far are they from being a Precept of the Law of *Moſes*, that by that Law the *Jews* were obliged to do kindneſſes to their very Enemies. E. g. *If thou meet thine* ENEMIES *Ox or Aſs going aſtray, thou ſhalt ſurely bring it back to him again. If thou ſeeſt the Aſs of him that* HATETH *thee lying under his burden, and wouldſt forbear to help him, thou ſhalt ſurely help with him.* How then can *Jeſus* be juſtified for citing theſe words, *And hate thine Enemy*, as a Law of *Moſes*, when he is ſo far from having ſuch a Precept that he expreſsly Commands the contrary?

R. Iſaac, Chizuk Emun. l. 2. c. 11.

Exod. 23. 4, 5.

I have given the Objection its intire force. And it ſeems at firſt ſight a conſiderable difficulty, and will require an anſwer.

In

In removing of which I will uſe no manner of artifice, nor lay hold of any thing that looks like a Subterfuge. I will not ſay that *Jeſus* does not quote the Law of *Moſes* for theſe words, *And hate thine Enemy.* And yet *Jeſus* does not ſay, *'Tis written in your Law.* He does not uſe his foregoing Style (where he cites the Law) *It hath been ſaid by them of old time.* All that *Jeſus* ſays here is, *Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid.* I paſs this by; Let the *Jew* or any other make the moſt of the Objection. I will ſuppoſe *Jeſus* to quote the Law of *Moſes:* Yet will this be of no force againſt the Credit of the Holy Goſpel. And this will be evident to him who ſhall duly conſider the following particulars.

I. That the Senſe of theſe words, *Hate thine Enemy*, is found in the Law of *Moſes*. If the ſubſtance of the thing be there, 'tis no matter whether the formal words be there or not. The Prophet *Ezekiel* tells us what God ſaid to the *Iſraelites*, when he undertook to deliver them out of *Egypt*, (which is as manifeſt a quotation of the *Hiſtory* as the
Ezek 20.7. words of *Jeſus* are of the *Law* of *Moſes*) *Caſt ye away every man the Abominations*

of

of his Eyes, and defile not your ſelves with the Idols of Egypt. I am the Lord your God. 'Tis expreſsly ſaid, that God ſaid thus unto them. Let any *Jew* ſhew where this is ſaid in ſo many words. If it be enough that the ſubſtance of this is ſaid, 'twill be ſufficient to juſtifie *Jeſus* to ſhew that the ſubſtance of what he ſays, was ſaid in the Law of *Moſes*. And that ſo it is, is evident beyond all exception. 'Tis well known what Law the *Jews* were under as to the Seven Nations. They were forbid to make any *Covenant*, or to contract any *affinity* with them: They were commanded to *ſmite* and to *deſtroy* them *utterly*, and forbid to *ſhew* them *mercy*. And for the *Amalekites*, they were obliged to *blot out* their *remembrance* from under Heaven, and expreſsly charged to *remember* and not to *forget* it. Hence might *Jeſus* truly ſay it had been ſaid, *Hate thine Enemy.*

Exod. 34. 12, 16. Deut. 7. 2, 3. Deut. 25. 17, 19. Exod. 17.

II. For the pretence of the *Jew*, that they were obliged by their Law to ſhew kindneſs to their Enemies, it will be found to be of no force if that Law be duely examined. For the Enemy mentioned in that Law extends no farther than to one of their own Nation or Religion,

ligion, to an *Iſraelite* or *Proſelyte* at ſartheſt. This will appear by comparing *Exod* xxiij. 4. with *Deut.* xxij. 1, 2, 3. He that in one place is called an *Enemy*, is in the other called a *Brother* three times together. And 'tis plain from the Context that that Law could not be extended to *Foreigners*. The *Jew* was not obliged to bring the ſtrayed Ox to the Dwelling of a Foreigner. *Thou ſhalt not avenge nor bear any grudge againſt* THE CHILDREN OF THY PEOPLE; and then it follows, *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf*, Lev. xix. v. 18. where Neighbour is reſtrained to the *Jew* by Nation, or Religion at moſt. Thus was the kindneſs limited and determined. The Seventh year was a year of releaſe: the *Jew* might not then exact his debt from his Neighbour or Brother: of a Foreigner he might. *Deut.* xv. 2, 3. They might not lend upon Uſury to a *Brother*; to a *Stranger* they might. *Deut.* xxiij. 19, 20. By a Brother they meant an *Iſraelite*. *He that ſtealeth a man*, &c. ſays the Law of *Moſes*, *ſhall ſurely be put to death*, Exod. xxj. 16. *Onkelos*, the Chaldee Paraphraſt, adds ſomething to the Text. *He that ſtealeth a man of the children of Iſrael*,

"Ος ἂν ἀνδρὸς ἢ ὁμοφύλου ἢ *Philo l. de Charitate.*

V. Onkel. & Targ. Jonath.

Iſrael, ſays He: Nor does he deſerve any blame for it; for we find the Law ſo explained in a parallel place. *If a man be found ſtealing any of his brethren of the children of Iſrael*, &c. *That Thief ſhall dye*, Deut. xxiv. 7. The oppreſſion of an hired Servant is indeed forbidden, but then this is to be underſtood of that Servant only who was an *Iſraelite* or *Proſelyte* (v. 14.)

III. Agreeably hereunto have the *Jewiſh Doctors* and *Caſuiſts* taught in their Books. They allow kindneſs due to one another: but they have advanced in their Writings ſuch propoſitions as have plainly ſhewn they have been little concerned for the Lives or Eſtates of thoſe of another Nation or Religion. And no wonder, when *neighbour* ſignifies no more with them than an *Iſraelite*, and *ſtranger* no more than a *Proſelyte*: For whatever kindneſs they are put upon towards their *neighbours* and towards *ſtrangers*, will not be thought due to men of another Nation and Religion. *Theſe* men muſt not expect *kindneſs*, 'Twill be well if they meet with common *juſtice* from them.

Bava Kama c. 4 §. 3. *cum Raham. Maimon. H. Deoth c.* 6. §. 3. *Bechai in legem fol.* 78. *col.* 3.

IV. The *Practice* of the *Jews* confirms this their ſenſe of the Law of *Moſes*:

Moſes: They were very moroſe towards Strangers, and particularly to-
John 4. 9. wards the *Samaritans*, who were placed in their neighbourhood. They were Enemies to thoſe of another Nation and Religion; They refuſed to ſhew common civilities to them, and thoſe offices which we judge due to humanity where-ever we meet with it. This ſurly diſpoſition of theirs was taken notice of by Heathen Writers.

Juven. *Non monſtrare vias eadem niſi ſacra colenti;*
Quæſitum ad fontem ſolos deducere Verpos.

They would not direct a Traveller, of another Nation or Religion, in his way; nor ſhew him common civilities. *Ta-*
Hiſtor. l. 5. *citus* takes notice of their Enmity and Hatred towards all Strangers, *Et quia apud ipſos fides obſtinata, miſericordia in promptu:* SED ADVERSUS OMNES ALIOS HOSTILE ODIUM.

This is ſufficient to juſtifie our Bleſſed Saviour, and may alſo be of uſe to the better underſtanding the Law of *Moſes.*

The

The *Jews* we ſee were obliged to deſtroy ſome people; and for the *kindneſs* to be ſhewed, it was to their *Brethren*, *i. e.* Men of their own Nation or Religion.

It cannot be denied that there are in the Laws of *Moſes* many Precepts of Mercy and Beneficence, that ſpeak a mercifull regard to the poor and miſerable, and commend Humanity and Good-will. This *Philo* obſerves and calls it *Philanthropy*, and the *Couſin*, the *Siſter* and *Twin* of *Godlineſs*: That Author hath written a Book on that Subject, and obſerves that it was much commended in the Law of *Moſes*. And certain it is that that Law did oblige the *Jews* to kindneſs to *ſtrangers*, it did forbid *oppreſſion* and *malice*: It did provide for the *Poor*, the *Widow* and *Fatherleſs*; For *Servants* and *Labourers*; They might not detain the Wages of the hireling, nor keep the poor man's garment as a pledge, nor take the mill-ſtone as ſuch. There were great proviſions for the needy, from the Laws concerning the *forgotten ſheaf*, the *gleaning*, the *corner* of the *Field*, and remainder of the *Vineyard*. The Law of the *Third years Tythe*, of the *Sabbatical* Deut. 15. 7. 24. 19.

cal Year and that of *Jubilee*, were very merciſull proviſions alſo for the neceſſitous.

Several other Laws there were which tended to preſerve Friendſhip and Goodwill among each other. The appearing of the ſeveral Tribes three times a year at *Jeruſalem* (as *Joſephus* obſerves) and feaſting together, preſerved Friendſhip. And *that* Law which required men not to keep by them the fleſh of their Peace-offerings, but to eat it in ſuch a time, conſtrained them to Hoſpitality and Bounty, as one of the Ancients hath well obſerved.

Antiq. l. 4. c. 8.

Lev. 7. 15, 16.

Theodoret in Levit. qu. 6.

But all that hath been ſaid amounts to no more than this, That they were obliged to be kind to *one another*, and were at the ſame time obliged to be in a ſtate of War and Enmity with other people. Their *Neighbour* and the *Stranger* took in the *Iſraelite* and *Proſelyte*, but did not reach to all the race of mankind. Thus we ſee how this matter ſtood under the Law of *Moſes*. *Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate*, &c.

II. I pro-

I proceed now to consider what *Jesus* requires of *his* Followers. *But I say unto you, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.* II.

Before I proceed any farther, I cannot but observe the *Extent* of a *Christian*'s Charity: It is directed to our *Enemies*, to them that *curse*, that *hate* us, that *despitefully use* and *persecute us*. That is to the whole race of mankind; To those who are not of our *Religion*, of our *Kindred*, or our *Nation*. The *Jewish* kindness was *confined* and *limited*. Their Charity *began* and *ended* at home. *He* was neighbour to the *Jew*, who was himself a *Jew*, as ye have heard. But our Saviour hath enlarged our Charity and Kindness: Every other man is the *Christian*'s neighbour, according to the Doctrine of *Jesus*. This appears from the Answer he gave to the Question of the Lawyer: He said unto Jesus, being willing to justifie himself, *Who is my neighbour?* Our Saviour's answer settles this matter, and extends the notion of it as far as to every other man. St. *Paul*, who well understood the Christian Doctrine, teacheth the same Doctrine. He interprets I. Luk. 10. 29

Rom. 13. 8, 9. τὸν πλησίον by τὸν ἕτερον, i. e. *Neighbour* by every *other man.* This is (not the *Jewiſh* indeed, but) the *Chriſtian* notion of it. 'Tis a mean thing to love our *friends* and *relations*, our own *tribe* and *party*. A *Publican* can do it, and deſerves no praiſe on that account. He would be a monſter that ſhould not do this. The *Chriſtian* Charity extends to the whole race of mankind. And this is that Charity that is truly Divine; *That* our Holy Religion commends, and this Benignity and Philanthropy adorns our Holy Inſtitution. To love none but our Tribe and Sect is an argument of a ſtingy and narrow Soul. We muſt love our Neighbour for *God's ſake*, and becauſe he bears his *Image*. And as this is an excellent Principle, ſo it extends our Charity to the whole race of mankind. For every man hath ſomething of the *Image of God*. But 'tis but reaſonable to love him *for our own ſakes*, as he ſhares with us in the common nature. And this Conſideration obligeth us to this Univerſal Kindneſs. The *Jews* inquire into the reaſons why God made but one man to be the common parent of mankind, and did not create ſome number of men to be the ſeveral Heads

Sanedr. c. 4. Sect. 5.

of

of diſtinct Families: I know no better reaſon than this, that we ſhould be kindly affected to one another as coming all from the ſame root and ſtock. Beſides what hath been ſaid, 'Tis certain that *Jeſus* took our *nature* upon him, He *taſted death for every man.* 'Twas a *love to mankind* that he manifeſted when he became Man and when he died on the Croſs; which Conſideration is of mighty force to engage us to this Extenſive Charity. He loved his Enemies, he prayed and died for them. And God (as *Jeſus* tells us) cauſeth his *Sun to riſe* on the *evil* as well as the *good.* That is, He does good to *his* Enemies, that we might think our ſelves obliged to do good to *ours.* Heb. 2. 9.

II. In the next place I conſider the *Degree* of this extended Charity. It does not only extend to our *Enemies*, to them that *curſe* and *hate* us, that *deſpitefully* uſe, and *perſecute* us, but it does this in a great degree. We muſt *love* them, *bleſs* them, *do them good* and *pray for* them. For our *Enemies*, we ought not indeed to ſtudy *revenge* upon them, and we are apt to think we acquit our ſelves fairly if we do not; but our Lord carries it far-

ther; *But I ſay unto you, Love your Enemies.* For them that *curſe* us, it is not enough that we forbear to curſe them; our Lord ſays, *Bleſs them that curſe you.* For them that *hate us*, it is well indeed that we do them no harm; but our Lord goes farther, *Do good to them that hate you.* For thoſe who *deſpitefully uſe us and perſecute us*, we do well not to imitate them, and not to return upon them with ſpitefull injuries and ill turns. (Thus far the beſt of the Heathen Philoſophy directs us.) But our Lord carries it higher ſtill; *Pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you.* This is the greateſt pitch and the higheſt flight of Charity. This is above the rate and meaſure of any other Philoſophy or Inſtitution. We ſhall be apt to ſay, as upon alike occaſion, the *Apoſtles ſaid unto* the Lord, *Increaſe our Faith.*

This *extent* and *degree* of Charity does ſpeak it *Chriſtian*, and does diſtinguiſh it from the *limited* and *leſs* Charity required by the Letter of the Law of *Moſes*. And as this is required by *Jeſus*, ſo what hath been ſaid upon this occaſion will help us to underſtand our Saviour's words: I mean thoſe words of his; *John* 13. 34. *A new Commandment*

ment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye love one another. Here our Lord requires both the greateſt *extent* and the *higheſt pitch* of Charity. And now it will be very eaſie to underſtand why *Jeſus* (who elſewhere calls it the *great Commandment*, and *his* Commandment) ſhould call it a *New Commandment*. It is true indeed that, *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour*, was a Precept as old as *Moſes*: And yet this Precept, as required by *Jeſus*, is a *New Commandment*, becauſe it extends to *new objects*, and requires an *higher pitch*: Beſides that the *motive* from whence it ſtands commended to us is *new* alſo; *As I have loved you, that ye love one another.* What St. *John* ſays elſewhere is no objection againſt this account of our Saviour's words. 'Tis true, when he ſpeaks of this Precept, He tells us that it is *not* a *new Commandment* but an *old Commandment*, and which we *heard from the beginning*. There is no difficulty ariſing hence; for it was no *new Commandment* to *Chriſtians* at that time when St. *John* wrote thoſe Epiſtles. For as the *Precept* it ſelf was old (even as old as *Moſes*) ſo they had been acquainted with the *extent* and *degree* of it, *from the beginning*

Matth. 22. 39.

Joh. 15. 12.

1 Joh. 2. 7. with 2 Ep. v. 5. and 1 Ep. 3. 2.

ginning, i. e. from our *Saviour* and the beginning of *Chriſtianity*. For that expreſſion imports no more in that place: and in that ſenſe it is alſo uſed, 1 *John* 2. 24. *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that, which ye have heard from the beginning, ſhall remain in you, ye ſhall alſo continue in the Son and in the Father.* The *beginning* here imports the beginning of *Chriſtianity*, as is evident from the Context. And ſo it ſignifies in thoſe words, *This is the meſſage that ye heard from the beginning, that we ſhould love one another*, 1 John 3. 11.

Theſe Holy Precepts are not hard to be underſtood. There's no difficulty appears as to that matter, if we look them over ſeverally. To *love our Enemies* imports Benevolence and a Diſpoſition to do them kindneſſes: *Bleſs them that curſe you*; This is explained ſufficiently by St. *Peter*. *Not rendring evil for evil, or railing for railing; But contrariwiſe Bleſſing, knowing that ye are thereunto called.* For the next, *Do good to them that hate you*, though it be plain enough without a Comment, yet St. *Paul* gives us a ſhort Paraphraſe upon it. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him: If*

1 Pet. 3. 9.

he

he thirſt, give him drink.——*Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.* For what follows, *Pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you*, nothing is more eaſie to be underſtood. And the dying words of our Lord, and of St. *Stephen*, are moſt conſpicuous Exemplifications of it. Rom. 12. 20, 21.

Theſe Precepts alſo, as they ſtand commended to us in our Holy Religion, are very reaſonable and juſt. We have no cauſe to complain of them, or find any fault with them. The practice of them is very much for the Peace of Societies and Communities, and will prevent innumerable miſchiefs which follow from malice, revenge, and rendring evil for evil. Beſides, the practice of theſe leſſons is commended from the moſt powerfull Conſiderations, and ſuch they are as ſpeak our Obedience *reaſonable*, and render it *eaſie* alſo. And they are ſuch as theſe. (1.) The Example of *God* himſelf. God is kind to his Enemies, and therefore 'tis very fit we ſhould be ſo to ours. 'Tis our Saviour's argument in the words next following the words of my Text. *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: For he maketh his* Matt. 5. 45.

Sun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain upon the juſt and upon the unjuſt. God feeds and preſerves, and heaps his Benefits upon thoſe who deny his Being or his Providence, and that call not upon his Name. (2.) Our Bleſſed *Saviour* loved his Enemies, he died for them, and prayed for them even when they were putting him to death. *Father forgive them —— God commend-*
Rom. 5 8. *eth his love toward us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us.* This is a very powerfull Conſideration to every ſincere Diſciple of *Jeſus.* (3.) Forgiveneſs of Enemies is made the *con-*
Mat. 5. 23, 24. 6. 14 15. 18. 35. *dition* of our own pardon and acceptance with God. And now 'tis not only our *duty* but our *intereſt*, which generally lays the ſureſt hold of Mankind. To which I may add (4.) That we are all very *obnoxious* to God. We need great forgiveneſs. *Who can underſtand his Errors? In many things we offend all.* There is no kind of proportion between our many and aggravated *Sins* againſt God, and the little *injuries* and *treſpaſſes* which we do to each other. The firſt are expreſ-
Matth. 18. 24, 25. ſed by *Talents* the other by *Pence.* The firſt by the number of Ten Thouſand, the other of an Hundred. 'Tis not hard to remit

mit a ſmall Summ when we need the remiſſion of ſo vaſt an one. *He* cannot find any difficulty to forgive a ſmall Debt, who ſo much needs to be forgiven the greateſt. In a word, to love our Enemies is an imitation of God, and our dear Maſter: 'Tis an Argument of a great and generous Mind. 'Tis equally our duty and our intereſt. 'Tis for the good of this lower World, and the way to a better. 'Tis the Ornament of our Religion, and ſpeaks the perfection of our Nature, and an high degree and pitch of Vertue.

As to the latter part of the words of my Text, *Pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you*, that will require a more particular and ſeparate Conſideration. For though thoſe words are eaſie to be underſtood, and our duty from them was commended by the Example of our Saviour; Yet it may ſtill be demanded if all manner of Prayer againſt our Enemies be there ſtrictly forbid?

For we find the Pſalmiſt frequently praying againſt his Enemies. And the Book of Pſalms makes up a conſiderable part of our publick Service, and we commonly *Obj.*

commonly bear a part in our Reſponſes therein. And yet we find there a great many Curſes and Imprecations, which we repeat in our daily Service, without any ſcruple or remorſe. Thus
Pſal. 6. 10. we find him praying, *Let all mine enemies be aſhamed and ſore vexed*; And,
10. 2. *Let them be taken in the devices* — A-
Pſal. 35. 4. gain, *Let them be confounded and put to*
40. 8. *ſhame*, &c. *Let the ſentence of guiltineſs*
55. 16. *proceed againſt him: And now that he*
58. 6, 7. *lieth, let him riſe up no more.* Again,
Let death come haſtily upon them, and
let them go down quick into Hell. Let
59. 5. *them be rooted out; and conſume away*
like a ſnail. We elſewhere find him
118. 7. ſpeaking of ſeeing *his deſire* upon his Enemies. To which I anſwer in the following particulars.

I. That it is certain that the *Hebrews* have no ſuch thing in their Language as an Optative Mood. And therefore we cannot from the bare formation of the Verb conclude the deſire or wiſh of him that ſpeaks. For the truth of this, I appeal to thoſe who are beſt skilled in that Language.

II. That

II. That however they have a way by which they expreſs their wiſh or deſire that a thing ſhould come to paſs. This the Pſalmiſt does by two words which expreſs the deſire of the ſpeaker. Thus, *O that the Salvation of Iſrael were come out of Sion.* And, *O that I had wings like a Dove*, &c. After this manner does the Pſalmiſt expreſs his wiſh or deſire. But he no-where uſeth this expreſſion where he is ſuppoſed to pray againſt his Enemies. מי יתן Pſal. 14. 7. 53. 6. 55. 6.

III. That it is very evident that the Pſalmiſt was far removed from that Spirit of revenge ſuppoſed in the Objection. *O Lord my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands: If I have rewarded evil to him that is at peace with me: (yea, I have delivered him that without cauſe was mine Enemy.)* Again, *They rewarded me evil for good, to the ſpoiling of my ſoul. But as for me when they were ſick, my cloathing was ſackcloth. I humbled my ſoul with faſting, and my prayer returned into mine own boſom. I behaved my ſelf as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother.* The Pſalmiſt elſewhere Pſ. 7. 3, 4. Pſ. 35. 13.

elſewhere tells how he was affected as
55. 12. to his Enemy. *It was not an Enemy that reproached me, then I could have born it.* *David* might well ſay ſo. He did with ſingular meekneſs bear the Reproaches and Curſes of *Shimei*, and the cauſeleſs Perſecutions of *Saul*, without rendring evil for evil, or railing for railing. It is not then very credible that he ſhould curſe his Enemies in his Prayers and ſolemn Devotions, and which he wrote by Divine Inſpiration.

IV. That the Verbs in the Hebrew, in the places above cited, and elſewhere, are in the Future Tenſe. And if ſome there be of the Imperative Mood, it alters not the Caſe, becauſe the Hebrew Grammarians agree that the Imperative is but another Future. There is not in any one of theſe places any Expreſſion that imports any wiſh or deſire. And then theſe Expreſſions are rather *Predictions* than *Prayers*; and tell us what ſhall come to paſs, rather than what the Pſalmiſt deſires. This is no new Opinion, nor without Ground. This agrees well with the Pſalmiſt's manner of ſpeech elſewhere. He tells us

R. Moſ. Kimchi Grammat. cum L'Empereur.

Non optat ſed prævidet. Prophetia eſt prænuncientis, non votum maledicentis. Auguſt.

us that the *ungodly ſhall not ſtand* in judgment; that *their way ſhall* periſh; that his *Enemies ſhall fall*, and that all the workers of iniquity *ſhall be ſcattered*, and that *He ſhall cut* them off in their own wickedneſs. In theſe places our Interpreters have kept to the Future: They had the ſame reaſon to have done it elſewhere, eſpecially in thoſe words, *Let his days be few, and let another take his office.* They might as well have rendred them, *His days ſhall be few, and another ſhall take his office.* 'Tis certain this contains a prediction of the fate of *Judas*; and St. *Peter* mentions this Scripture as a *Prophecy* not as a *Prayer.* He tells us that this Scripture *muſt needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghoſt by the mouth of David* SPAKE BEFORE *concerning Judas.* And if this be ſo, no man can blame the Pſalmiſt for denouncing *Evil* againſt *Evil* men, any more than he ought to blame the Prophets for Propheſying Evils againſt the greateſt Sinners and Perſecutors of God's Church and People.

Pſal. 1. 5, 6. 9. 3. 92. 9. 94. 23. 109. 8. with Act. 1. 16.

V. It is farther to be conſidered, that many of thoſe places in the Book of

Pſal. 5. 10. 10. 2. 69. 22. 79. 12. 83. 13. 109. 8. 129. 5. of Pſalms are to be underſtood of the *Enemies* of *God* and of his *Church*. And therefore the Pſalmiſt is not to be ſuppoſed to indulge himſelf the liberty of Imprecations and Curſes againſt his private and particular Enemies, when he denounceth Woes againſt the Enemies of God and his Truth. Beſides, 'tis certainly lawfull to pray againſt the Enemies of God, and of the Truth and publick Peace, and thoſe whom gentle means are not likely to reduce; and ſuch there are many times who are incorrigible. We have an antecedent obligation to God and to the Community whereof we are Members: and where our Cauſe is righteous, and Truth is oppreſſed, we may lawfully appeal to God by War; and conſequently pray to him for ſucceſs, and deſire him to abate the Pride and confound the Devices of the Common Enemy. This does not claſh at all with the Precept in my Text. For in this caſe the Enemies are not conſidered as *our* Enemies ſo much, as the Common Enemies of God and of his Truth.

VI. After all, if we conſider the places ſingly and ſeparately, we ſhall not find

find them import ſo much harm as may be ſuppoſed at the firſt ſight. That our Enemies ſhould be *aſhamed, and confounded*; that their *way* ſhould be *dark and ſlippery*, in ſhort comes but to thus much, that they may be diſappointed in their Evil attempts. I have not time to deſcend to *particulars*. Thus much is certain, that ſome places ſound harſh, and appear very ſeverely in our *Verſion*, when they do not ſo in the *Original*. I will give an inſtance or two. *Let death come haſtily upon them, and let them go down quick into Hell.* Here the word we render *Hell* commonly ſignifies no more but the *Grave* or place of the *Dead*. And he that looks on the words as they lie in the *Hebrew*, can infer no more than this, that the Pſalmiſt predicts the ſudden *death* of men in whoſe dwellings is wickedneſs: There is nothing farther that the words do import. Again, where we read of the good man's ſeeing *his deſire* upon his Enemies: The expreſſion is indeed *Elliptical*, but *his deſire* is *added* to ſupply the *Ellipſis*, 'tis not in the *Original* Text.

Pſal. 55. 16.

Pſal. 112. 8. 118. 7.

I ſhall

I ſhall now proceed to make ſome *Application* of what hath been ſaid.

I. If we ſtand obliged by the Law of *Jeſus* to love our Enemies, *&c.* and *Jeſus* hath in this Law obliged us to a greater extent and degree of Charity and Kindneſs than the Letter of the Law of *Moſes*; How inexcuſable are thoſe men, who inſtead of obeying theſe Precepts of *Jeſus*, come ſhort of what *Moſes* required? Theſe men certainly deſerve reproof, and are very unworthy of the title of Chriſtians. There are two ſorts of theſe.

Firſt, Thoſe who are ſo far from loving their *Enemies*, that they do not love *one another*. They are ſo far from coming up to the pitch of Charity which *Jeſus* requires, that they come ſhort of the loweſt meaſure which was taught by *Moſes*. By the Law of *Moſes* the *Jews* were obliged to love thoſe of their own *Nation* and *Religion*, though otherwiſe they were Enemies. I wiſh we went thus far; I am ſure our Saviour goes higher; And we muſt do ſo too as we hope to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. *Secondly*,

Secondly, There are others who are ſo far from loving their Enemies, as our Saviour requires, that they are Enemies, without any cauſe at all, to their Brethren. Inſtead of loving our Enemies, bleſſing them that curſe us, doing good to them that hate us, praying for our Perſecutors; there are thoſe who hate, who curſe, who injure, who reproach thoſe who have done them no harm. They *ſpeak* Evil of them of whom they *know* none: They contend with thoſe that are for Peace. They are ſo far from obeying *Jeſus*, that they have not complyed with *Solomon*'s eaſie leſſon. *Strive not with a man without cauſe, if he have done thee no harm.* Theſe are ſo far from the *Chriſtian* and *Divine* Charity, that they come ſhort of the *Jewiſh*. So far are they from loving their Enemies, that they hate the moſt conſpicuous Vertue, and the greateſt Benefactors to mankind. No Vertue can be a ſecurity againſt ſuch as theſe. Theſe men can hardly love thoſe that love them: They are ſo far from the *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian*, that they hardly arrive at the unrewardable Charity of the *Publican*. Prov. 3. 30. Mat. 5. 46.

Theſe men are in the *Gall of bitterneſs, and bond of iniquity.* God *open* their *eyes* and turn their *hearts.*

II. Let me exhort you to the practice of the Leſſon laid before us in the words of my Text. *Love your Enemies*, &c. We ſhall never want an occaſion to exerciſe this Vertue. Our Saviour who gives us this *Rule*, gave us alſo the greateſt *Example* of it. Hence it is moſt powerfully commended to us. It may be thought difficult; but we may be reconciled to it, when we conſider that He who requires it, did Himſelf practice it alſo. We call him *Lord*, and 'tis fit we ſhould *obey* and *follow* him. We need *God's* pardon; and if we have a due ſenſe of what that imports, and that this is the way to obtain it, we ſhall not think much to forgive *one another.* Let me
Eph. 4. 31, 32. ſpeak in the Apoſtle's words; *Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-ſpeaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's*
5. 1, 2. *ſake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God as dear Children; And walk*

walk in love as Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us, an offering and a ſacrifice to God——

To God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, be all honour and praiſe.

Amen.

FINIS.

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